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THE

ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER.

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY ROSE ELLEN HENDRIKS.

VOL. III.

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THE

ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

SEPTEMBER—who loves not September? It is the waning voice of summer, telling its last passionful notes to mankind. Already the bright Eastern sun sinks earlier in the West, and evening breezes warn us that a colder time is approaching. September is hailed by a thoughtful mind, as the soft shadow of the glow of summer, marshalling the way slowly to a hemisphere of colder feeling. Those who have spent the summer in a dream of hope,

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wake in that month to the reality that expectation has grown dimmer; and September warns the heart, that Hope's warm whispers will sometimes cease to exist.

It was with pensive and subdued feelings, that Clementina felt a secret presentiment that she should not live to see another September; that she should not weather another winter, nor watch another spring-tide blow; her beauty was pale, and her form drooped as the lily by the side of the gentle stream; her eye had the plaintive look of long-existing suffering, and her breath the faint perfume of the pale, dying rose; no bright buoyancy lent quickness to her footsteps; and yet Henri of Guise passed his fingers through the thin but lovely tresses of her hair; his breath fanned her cheek, and she had not courage to shudder. To-morrow was fixed for their union. Clementina heard her lover fondly repeat it, and she answered with a sickly smile; her voice was choked by her distressing cough, and with a lover's blind-

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ness, still Henri persuaded himself that it was a passing indisposition.

"I shall soon die," said Clementina, pressing her thin hands on her aching chest.

"Oh, say not so," replied Henri; "Italia's balmy skies will restore you; my love shall cheer you. The rose blooms still, after it has been washed with many showers; and you, too, will soon raise your graceful head, and, perchance, smile on me."

And Clementina unconsciously smiled on him *then*, but it was one of those smiles, which, had not the Duke been wrapped in a delusive dream of bliss, he must have caught as a warning that angels were hovering round Clementina's pure spirit, ready to pillow her in their own slumbers.

After a pause, Clementina continued:—"If I die, Henri—die your own bride—you must consider I have fulfilled the wish of your heart. And, oh, Henri, you must never injure my father; you must persuade him not to dissect heads, and live amongst such strange things

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as I saw once, and once only, in his chamber. Oh, that day, that dreadful day! Do not look angry, Henri, or I shall weep, and it hurts my chest sadly when I weep. I had a dream last night. I *fancied* my father was here May I see him?"

"It was a dream, Clementina, nothing but a dream; yet, he *shall* see you as soon as the Cardinal de Lorraine has united us. Your pardon, beloved, for keeping you here, but I wish you to enter my castle as my bride; this is pure regard for your own reputation."

Clementina loathed the heart which had already told her two falsehoods in a moment, but she was afraid to make him angry; and still that small gentle voice at her heart whispered that her soul would soon be at rest.

"Henri, you have not yet answered me; say, that if I die, you will not injure one hair of my father's head?"

"Why speak of your death, my beloved? Look at the mirror before you; your cheek has

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the bright tint of the damask rose, and your eyes sparkle like that bright diamond on your finger."

"Oh, that was the Queen of Navarre's gift; at least, I like to think of her as the gay young Princess Marguerite, for then she knew not what it was to weep. But again we are wandering from our subject. You will not harm my father?

"No, no; why think it?"

"Do not speak like that, Henri; your words do not sink to the heart; they sound as light as the white froth on the bosom of the sea, which is seen one moment and vanishes into naught the next. Look at this golden crucifix," continued Clementina, drawing it from her bosom; "all good Catholic as I am, I regard it as sacred only when, in looking at it, we direct our gaze towards Him who suffered on it; pause, then, Henri, before you swear; pause, and think you are uttering a binding, a sacred oath: pause, ere you tell me you will not injure my father!"

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A mighty spirit seemed to turn the Duke from uttering the oath; but he looked again at Clementina: her lovely eyes were fixed on him, waiting to gladden at the sound of the oath; in her white hands she held the crucifix, whilst her lips were parted, as if the words trembled on *her* tongue, which she wished to hear uttered by the Duke.

"Clementina, give me the crucifix, and hear me; I swear on it, not to injure your father!"

You swear it solemnly, as you value your peace here, and your rest hereafter?"

"I do; solemnly, most solemnly.

Stop!" exclaimed Clementina, with sudden energy. "And you promise, too, that no absolution shall absolve you from your vow?"

"That do I also promise. And now, my Clementina, replace that cross in your bosom, and bid it bind trust, love, and hope around your heart; say you do *not* wish to die, for if you did, the angels could refuse you nothing!"

"I think it is sinful to wish to die, Henri;

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but when we feel every nerve shattered, when the heart is actually beating fainter and fainter within us, is it right to neglect the warning voice?"

"But, Clementina, you look so beautiful!"

"The earth often looks lovely just before the death-like breath of the tempest is ushered in; and human beings are only creatures of earth. Have you ever seen any one in a consumption?"

"No," replied Henri

"I have," said Clementina; "poor Loretta, who died so suddenly, took me one day to solace the death-bed of a young creature, eighteen years old, who died so beautiful; and she was in a consumption. She coughed as I do, and her cheek had that same burning glow, blooming like a delusive picture of a rose which has no scent. Feel how burning warm it is; I know I am in a consumption. Oh, this dreadful cough; give me a glass of water, Henri."

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Henri obeyed, and supported her trembling head, feeling a sort of bitter reflection at the recollection that the head which reposed on his shoulder, from utter inability to support itself, had never reclined there in its bright days of glory.

"Yes, Henri," continued the poor young girl, "I know I am in a consumption; never mind, when I die you can marry again. I am not high-born enough to be a Duchess."

"You are fit to be a Queen!" And at the mention of that name, Clementina recollected the uncomfortable words which she had heard uttered with regard to the King; and with the truest delicacy of the female heart, though conscious that her death was at hand, she determined that to marry the Duke was the only way of insuring that her name should still be held in respect.

"When we are drawing near the eternal shore," she continued, rather speaking to her own burning thoughts, than to the Duke,

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"how very differently we consider earthly events. How much of my life would I recall, and now it is too late—my foolish wish of forming one of the gay throng who break their hearts in the *beau milieu* of the vortex of fashion. I thought myself much to be pitied when I was at peace with my lyre, my birds, and my girlish thoughts; and now, now—but painful is the retrospect of the lives of more than one person who is at the threshold of Eternity. No willingly-committed sin has soiled my conscience, and yet I know I am sinful. I have keen regrets, for I feel that my sorrows have been sent as a punishment for my temerity in wishing to change that lot in which it pleased Providence to place me."

"Clementina, are these fit words to cheer a lover's ears? This is a desponding fear which temporary weakness has made you feel. Cast it off, dearest; live again for my own ardent love."

"When the toilsome bee has accomplished its

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summer's work, when it has fluttered round the gayest flowers, and sucked the nectar from the honeysuckle and rose, then, in its plain straw hive, it learns that a cold winter comes, when no more honey can be gathered. What has it then to do but to lie down and die? Roses and honeysuckle have been at my feet, but they faded after blooming one morn; thorns and brambles next thickly strewed my path; I gathered them too, and now what have I left but to die?"

"No, you must walk with me to a fairer parterre, where more roses and more honeysuckle will twine around you; you must sip anew the cup of happiness, and leave despondency to those who have not the moral courage to soar above the trying circumstances of life. For my part, I always think there are more Edens than one."

"That sort of consolation is like throwing a cord to a mariner who sinks for the second time; but after the third plunge, he has not

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even strength to seize the proffered assistance. My bark, Henri, has foundered on hard rocks, and cannot be rebuilt; I have *had* my third plunge, and I shall not live to have a fourth."

"No, dearest, I do not wish to see you toss again on the sea of affliction; I wish to see you raise your head, and show me that you can again return my devoted and constant love."

Words like these always seemed to Clementina's ears a mockery of the past, and she interrupted Henri by asking him if he would accompany her into the garden, which relieved the isolated mansion from much of its loneliness.

"Very willingly," replied Henri; and the old woman, who had most faithfully attended by Clementina's bed-side, duly wrapped her shawls, whilst the grateful girl smiled her thanks, though a mournful shake of her head seemed to say, "It is all useless; the worm lies in the bark of the tree."

Presently Henri and his promised bride

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wended their way down the sloping stone stairs which conducted to a garden, excavated so as to form a place of sweet shade. An inattentive observer, to have seen that fair form leaning on the arm of the handsome young Duke by her side, would have proclaimed them passing happy; but, alas! the reason of that close pressure of her arm originated in her weakness, for her tottering steps could hardly support her fragile form. As she passed on towards the broad gravelled road, Clementina raised the heads of more than one drooping flower; and as she bent over them with more tender solicitude than is usually bestowed on anything which cannot express a love of being fondled, her tears moistened the raised leaves, and she muttered softly, "Blow, blow, until I also am no more."

How much a fair garden makes us think of a future existence; and how wonderful it is that nature is so admirably constructed, that the heart must be hard indeed, when wrapped in its

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own idiotical feelings of Atheism, it refuses to believe that there is One above who made the lovely chaos of nature. Henri, I shall be your bride before my spirit takes its flight to its long-promised home. Then, as the solemn bell tolls slowly for me—as, earth to earth, my form is placed in the cold grave—then think more of my words than perhaps you would have done in my life-time. And Henri, if you ever feel inclined to do a dark or evil deed, go there, where I loved so on earth to wander; and if departed spirits from their seat of beatitude are allowed to range on earth below, then mine shall hover around you, and impart strength to your wavering heart. Walk, then, when the shades of evening are stealing placidly on the departing day; come when no prying eyes can see you; and should a tear start to your eye, as your soul catches the divine harmony of the sun's farewell, dash not away the tear; tears shame not a man when they wash away a sin from the heart ere it has found its way to the

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view of fellow men. Let flowery dells and leafy groves be your favourite haunts, for they have been the loved places of my admiration. The low moaning wind chasing to and fro the leaves at your feet, will at length become a welcome music to your ears. There is a poesy in nature which grafts in the heart a wish to do *better* than the common range of men, for the mind must acquire a certain degree of noble and lofty feelings, ere it dare commune with heart-felt pleasure with nature's works.

"Where did you learn your pleasing eloquence, which flows like gentle music on the ear?"

"Where, Henri? It makes me sad to think. I formed my philosophy (if loving nature be philosophic) by learning to feel that there was more sympathy in the mute works of creation than in all the consolation man lends to our woes. Misfortune often comes with a salutary balm to the heart. Perhaps, had fortune smiled upon me, I too might have formed

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the train of one of the frivolous persons who bask in a sunny dream of unmeaning ideas."

"Never, never! Oh! my beloved Clementina, your heart is worth the trouble of suing and loving long. If we admire your graceful body, and your fair face, your noble mind is stamped on both. Methinks a graceful body is so often the type of a lofty mind."

"Lofty, perhaps, but for all that, ill-directed," replied Clementina, as her thoughts strayed towards Catherine de Médicis; that powerful mind being indeed cased in a most graceful mould, but working, nevertheless, no good. "You forget, Henri, how often false, though glittering, gold is placed in a tinselled and showy casket; whilst the pure unvarnished metal is so often shrined in the plainest exterior. Men rarely care for the outward case, if their jewel be of great value; and it is rare, I think, that a graceful body has a mind capable of lending all the boasted beauty of the exterior."

"Then how much more to be treasured when

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it *is* found. Clementina, as here I walk by your side, as I catch the silvery notes of your sweetly-toned voice, I feel inclined to inhale, if I could, part of your mildness and goodness. I could love you through wo as well as weal, and shall content myself with winning a smile of approval from you; only, beloved of my heart! gem of purest price! talk no more of dying. Nay, hear me! bear our final destiny in view, if thou wilt, but talk not of it on the eve of our wedding-day."

"So soon! is it the third of September? Oh yes, so it is; forgive me for forgetting it; and your promise, or rather your oath, towards my father will not be forgotten."

"No, never, never!"

"Now, then, let us return. Yet, no; let us wait awhile; twilight's beauty is the farewell of day, and we will utter our farewell to the light. Hark! dost thou hear the vesper bell chiming dulcetly on the breeze! The chapel is afar, or I would fain go there."

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"Not to-night, dearest; the evenings are chilly?"

"No, not to-night," repeated Clementina, "but I feel not the air cool: there is a kindred balm in it; it refreshes my whole frame; it seems as if the air and myself were twin-sisters, it kisses so gently my brow. Methinks it would be sweet to yield up our breath in one of these ecstasies of bliss. Methinks it would be more blessed to die with the tall posies blowing before our expiring gaze, and the crystal founts flowing at our feet, than to depart in the lonely night, with the sighs of those around us thrilling to our hearts."

"Again talking of dying, Clementina?"

"Pardon, me, Henri, but I feel so lonely here. I feel as if this house were not my habitation; I feel as lonely as if I were far off in the stranger's land, where the sunny flowers of Italia cannot possibly blow. Death is stamped on my brow; death is cankering my heart. Like yon blade of grass, many a blade lies

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withered by its side, and already its root is parched, and it hastes to rejoin its companions. Henri, my mother died in a consumption."

But Henri could not answer. Every feeling of his heart was wrung; the slender arm which hung upon his had felt gradually more tremulous, and the hectic glow having dispersed from her cheek, his promised bride was pale, pale as a stricken flower by the snowy mountain's side; and yet, as Henri led her towards the house, he pressed her thin hand to his lips, saying, fervently—"To-morrow, to-morrow."

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CHAPTER II.

THE Astrologer, from his chamber on high, saw that fervent kiss; but he saw, too, another sight. With eyes blinded with tears, distorted with the gaze which tried to penetrate deeper, the Astrologer saw a sight which made the blood flow uneasily in his veins—which made him tremble in every limb—which palsied him with sorrow: he saw—he saw—that Clementina was dying. From the open casement he endeavoured to call her beloved name, but his tongue felt tied to the roof of his mouth; he tried, but vainly, hopelessly, to call her, and

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then he sunk on a chair, whilst tears, flowing from the deepest fount of agony, coursed each other down his cheeks, and oozed out of his extended hands, in which his horror-stricken face rested. Pettura wrung his hands in agony—he clasped them far above his head—he lifted his tearful eyes to heaven—angels seemed to whisper, "fall down on thy knees and pray;" and evil spirits hovered round too, and said, "Thou benighted heart, what hast *thou* to do with prayer?" But, convinced that prayer is not denied to any one, at length Pettura fell on his knees:

"Oh Almighty Father, Great Creator of mankind," he exclaimed, "my child looks wan and pale; she is withered as the tall grass which the mowers reap, but Thou canst restore her if Thou wilt. Cut off rather the strong man, the sinful father of that innocent, that sweet young plant. Oh spare the twig, and take the gigantic oak."

Alas! Pettura felt he *could* not pray; his

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words were fervid, but they were wild, and wanted the resignation of early habits of piety. Man, learn that in thy affliction it is not the only time to pray. In the sweetest hour of sunny mirth it is as dangerous to neglect prayer as in the hour of misfortune.

The unhappy Pettura paced up and down his room; he shook the heavy door violently, but the trusty bolts refused to surrender to his strength. There he felt he must linger, and reflect too on that painful truth! Now learnt he that the hideous cough which had sounded in his chamber, in the silence of the night, issued from poor Clementina's lips. The evening set in; a slight tempest took place of the calm of the day; a piteous, howling wind moaned through the open casement; the rain pattered against his pale face; yet there the unhappy father leant, watching each starry gem, which gradually spangled the bosom of the sky. But there he read no comfort; no voice cheered his grief-stricken heart, for it is a pitiful thing

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for a fond father to lose a daughter. No voice was there, save the low murmuring of the wind, singing a requiem of what?—of Clementina's death, the spirit of the grave whispered, and poor Pettura believed the cry. In vain he tried to struggle with the burden of his sorrow. "Is nothing to live which belongs to me?" exclaimed the grief-stricken man. "I pillowed my bride in the slumbering hands of death; I caught her last faint sigh, and she looked scarcely paler than did my child last night. Can nothing save her? Is it the hideous love of the Duke, which has led her to her early grave? have his unwelcome caresses tainted her with death's mark? Must she, oh, must she die? Child of my affections! dearest object of my earthly hopes! now, according to thy wishes, thou wilt be a bride; not in the Church, but in Heaven itself. And was not that graceful form worthy of dying in her trimly-decked bed in the Palace walls? Was it written in the book of her fate, that she was to die in this

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unknown place, away from those to whom her eye had become familiar! Away the dreadful thought! she *will* not die."

* * * * *

When he raised again his face from his hands, the attendant who brought him his evening meal, civilly asked him if any thing ailed him?

"Man, man, art thou a father?"

"Yes, I have two blooming children."

"Ah! then thou wilt scarcely do my bidding, for thou hast not a child falling, withering, dying; thou hast not a child whose life is waning away, without one kindred soul near to wipe away the drops of death gathering on her brow, and whisper the last, sad farewell."

"Speak you of the fair Clementina, Signor? Ah, yes, she is pale and thin; and she sighs, and sometimes smiles, just as an angel would smile. But speak you of her?"

"I do! Hark! didst hear that fearful cough? It is the knell of her death."

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"Man, man, thou art a servant, and I have never bowed to crowned heads, but here I bow me to thee; here, on my knees, I ask but one grace; deny it me, and I shall expire. Leave but the bolt of my door unfastened."

"But the risk——"

"Thou shalt have none, my child is too weak to fly. I pledge my word to give her but one kiss; or, if more, not to wake her from her slumbers. I will return at one in the morning; come thou then back and bolt the door."

"My death be on your shoulders if you break your word, Signor; but I have two children, and they may prosper from my kindness."

"I understand thee; here is gold, plenty of gold;" and the Astrologer poured more coins into the servant's hands than he would have received for a twelvemonth's wages which were his due.

I will withdraw your bolt at twelve, Signor, for the Duke is yet stirring."

"No, no, my word is as good as thine; leave

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the door unfastened. I will not sally forth till twelve. Where does my daughter sleep?"

"See you yon light!" said the servant, leading Pettura to the window; "she must have retired, for that is her chamber."

"Thank you, thank you. Good night; I cannot speak."

The man bowed, and retired.

Pettura pushed his untasted meal far from him, and stood watching that light which beamed from the chamber where his beloved child was suffering; whilst ever and anon, at uncertain intervals, that distressing shrill cough broke upon the father's ears, as he had heard it in years gone by, when his bride was dying.

"Thank, thanks to the Duke, for bringing me to this captive place," said the afflicted Pettura; for, at least, I may snatch a last fond kiss from my child's pale brow."

* * * * *

Poor consolation for a doting parent!

"Must she die—must she die?" cried the

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afflicted Pettura, striking his hand on his poor beating temples. "Oh, God! again, again that warning cough! Unhappy parent, unhappy being!" and again Pettura sunk on his knees; again he offered up a prayer, fervent—heart-felt—agonizing; not through the whole course of his life had he ever thus prayed. Vain belief of man, that he can thus pass a sinful life, careless of all futurity, careless of the commands of his Maker, and that at the last hour of danger his prayer will be heard!"

Pettura felt a cold shudder through all his veins, as there he prayed; he dared no more beg the boon of life for his child, and he it was who had helped to undermine the fair young tree. Now, all that he dared pray for was to pillow the poor dying head—to listen to her last sad breathing—to hope that, since die she must, her death might come when he was pillowing her.

Lost in a chaos of by-gone reflections, Clementina appeared before the father's gaze, as

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if again a lisping darling child; he shuddered—he thought her baby hands were round his neck; he groaned aloud—he thought her lips were pressed to his. Unhappy parent! what so dreadful as tardy remorse? Pale, pale, was his brow; like a spectre of the spell-binding creature, that energetic being once had been, and yet bruised and spirit-warped in mind. He was feeling more hallowed fear in that one dreadful night, than he had in a whole life before. Now appeared before him many black and dreadful scenes, far more terrific than pen can describe. Now, now, he deemed in his agony, that his child's death would be his curse-like visitation.

"Visit not on my beloved child, thy wrath; God! Gracious God! if thou canst be the Avenger, be Thou also the Merciful? Impart new health to the child! Take! oh! take the erring father?"

No more he said—no more; he laid himself down upon his couch—the prisoned couch, near

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the abode of his suffering child. He buried his head in his hands; he groaned from the depths of his troubled soul; and then he seemed to feel each moment magnified to an hour's endurance. Some nameless power seemed to spell-bind the time. Still, still, burned the quenchless fire of the perturbed heart.

The heavy clock struck eleven, but the sound of human voices still resounded through the lonely mansion; still the rain descended in torrents, and Pettura's head was not withdrawn from the open casement. Another hour, and the confirmation of his fears were to be realized—another hour, and his own feverish lips would press Clementina's pale brow. Pettura had not been in the habit of meeting his child at each morning meal; he had not for many years nightly given her a father's blessing; but for sixteen years of her young life, she had been constantly under his eye, and it is the ties of early life which principally bind a father to his child. Every limb of Pettura's body shook, as he

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looked for, and yet dreaded, the coming hour; and the stormy heavens seemed to prognosticate that his worst fears would be realized.

The world was wrapped in her night's garb; the bats and owls had left their hiding-place, the discordant flapping of their wings sounding against the jutting and irregular wings of the mansion. Again Pettura clasped his hands, and bowed his knees in prayer; he uttered words almost wild from their passionate energy, whilst to his bewildering brain the world seemed darkened, and he fancied he held converse with spirits, which, whether they boded good or evil, he had not power to know. Scarcely could it be termed prayer, the broken exclamations which fell from the Astrologer's lips; they were more the most eloquent outpourings of grief; and yet, with his knees bowed, he continued long, for the lowly posture of genuflexion seemed to express the utter lowliness of his spirit.

Meanwhile, the gentle Clementina had long

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reposed in a slumber which was refreshing, although the sleeper sighed deeply and frequently, even when wrapped in the oblivion which Nature grants to the wearied children of earth. Grief then sung a requiem around her couch, whilst the oppression of illness caused those sighs to heave, which fell drearily from her oppressed chest.

"Did she feel the warm breath which fanned her cheek? Did she hear the deep sigh which surpassed the strength of her own? Did she feel the scalding tear which laved her fair cheek? Did she hear her name pronounced wildly, fondly, uttered from the depths of a doting father's heart? Or was it instinctively that in her slumbers her arms twined themselves round Pettura's neck?

It was the passion of despair which nerved the strain of affection in which her slumbering form was clasped, till that distressing cough fanned the Astrologer's cheek, and he laid her then gently back on her pillow.

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He placed her as carefully as a mother hushes her pretty babe to rest; and he hung around her, wondering if mortality had indeed struck that face of almost marble whiteness. The long lashes were reflected, as in downcast heaviness they fringed the cheek. Then, Pettura seized the lamp, and held it at a little distance from the bed; the dull reflection served only to make Clementina's face appear paler, and he placed it down again, lest his groan of agony should awake the sufferer from her slumbers.

"Shall I wake her?" thought Pettura; "shall I let her know that I am watching, tearfully, by her bed-side; that her cheek is bedewed with my tears? No! rather let her slumber, ignorant that one, far less pure than she is, is now watching her angelic face."

Again the Astrologer found himself within his chamber, and not for the wealth of kingdoms would he have wandered away. He heard the bolt drawn outside his door; and it was a

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welcome sound—it seemed to bind him closer, nearer, to his sick child.

The morning dawned, and, as if to lend a momentary ray of gladness to the faded girl's heart, it dawned in all the purity of the most sunny loveliness; it seemed as if it wished to cheer the heart of the desponding bride.

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CHAPTER III.

"HENRI, my mother died in a consumption." These were words which, in spite of all his assumed lightness, haunted the young Duke's ears. Was it true that Clementina was withering, like the summer flowers droop, too lovely to be seared by autumn's last breath?

Whilst the unhappy Pettura prayed, the Duke was watchful also. A boding fear he could not surmount took possession of his heart, and once or twice he paced up and down his chamber.

He dare not ask himself whether he had re-

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duced Clementina to her present state. All he could wish was for the morrow.

Oh, man, man, canst thou not conceive that the darkness of the night often-times veils sorrow and care in her keeping?

Ah, Henri of Guise wished so ardently for that morning to dawn: but suddenly he starts —yes, upon his ears broke the same hollow cough which had so sorely tried Pettura's feelings. Could that hollow, sepulchral sound, come from the chest of her he loved? He stole softly into the passage—he listened—it was true.

Again, and again, it broke upon the midnight stillness, forewarning the fate of her, so lovely, so gentle.

Henri clasped his hands in agony to his brow; he returned to his room, and after a few moments he left the house.

A walk of some ten minutes brought him to a white house, surrounded by high palings, and situated in an isolated lane

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He knocked, and was admitted; he gave his message to a sleepy servant, and presently a portly, good-humoured-faced man, forty-three or forty-four years of age, stood before him.

"Good Heavens, my Lord Duke! do you feel ill?" said Monsieur Baptiste, with his lowest bow. "You do look very pale."

"Nay, nay, good M. Baptiste; I come not for myself. Is—is—is—Clementina worse?"

The physician turned away his head, whilst a tear trembled in his honest eye.

"Answer my question," said the Duke, in a hollow voice. "Will she—will she die?"

"The disease is often deceptive; very, my Lord."

The disease—what disease? speak, man. Is —is——"

"She is *consumptive*——"

"*Consumptive!* Man, man. Monsieur Baptiste—you mean she *is* in a *consumption*, and she will die. Poor, poor Clementina! But *you* do not say she will die. Perhaps there is

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hope. Perhaps Italy's balmy clime may restore her. Many persons are cured in Italy, Monsieur Baptiste? She is not so very, very bad, is she?"

Alas! the physician knew she was very bad; but tender-hearted most medical men are. They know what sorrow is,—they know that the mind's sorrow is worse than that of the body; they see life waning, and unbelievers they must be, if they asked not where went the soul, wafted from its tenement of clay. Monsieur Baptiste had a keen knowledge of human hearts; he felt that, since Clementina had been taken by the Duke to become his wife, was now the best reparation a dying woman could wish.

It was for this event poor Clementina now prayed, and it was for this event the kind physician continued his exertions, although he felt how utterly past recovery his hapless young patient was.

"I dare not say I can save your affianced

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bride," said Monsieur Baptiste, after a pause; "but——"

"What, in the name of Heaven, is the use of my marrying Clementina, if she is to die?" exclaimed the Duke, stamping his foot on the floor; but the next moment he seemed to read the thoughts which were passing in the physician's heart.

"Ah, yes," he cried, in softened accents, "death will be no punishment to her; she will be far happier than here. I alone shall feel the anguish. Clementina! beloved Clementina! yes, dearly do I love thee; thou shalt be my bride; none after thy death shall have the power of saying 'the Duc de Guise kept thee.' Fear not, good Monsieur Baptiste, I am calmer now. Tell me, I pray, can she not yet live some time longer?"

"She may, perhaps, live longer than we can even imagine," was the reply.

"Thank you, thank you;" and pressing the physician's hands in his, the Duke could add

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no more, but, bowing his head down, tears fell on the hands he held.

The humble village physician never thought to see the proud Duke humbled before him. He felt most painfully affected by the scene, and he vainly endeavoured to change the subject. It was one which had taken complete hold of the young Duke's mind.

"Well, then, to-morrow Clementina will be my bride," said the Duke, looking up, whilst a smile—a strange, sad smile—lighted his features.

"Good night, Monsieur Baptiste—good night—pray for Clementina—good night."

* * * * *

He could not return home, but he wandered forth in the night air. The bats and owls were wandering about: they flapped their wings rudely round him; the young man shuddered.

Not a star was on the breast of heaven; the evening was calm, but dark; it was close, too—no balmy wind fanned his heated brow, no blithesome light guided his steps.

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He returned home, but he did not undress. Oh, what a fearful night he passed! If Clementina sighed for the morning to complete her sacrifice, how anxiously he watched for the sun's earliest rays! He walked forth once more from his chamber, and trod with somewhat more hope the dew-glistening lawns.

Alas! alas! Clementina came not forth as usual; as his fond heart had anticipated.

A fearful crisis had arrived, and, for the first time, the invalid herself felt how near she was to her end. In the exertion of the last night's distressing cough, she had ruptured a vessel, and the sanguinary drops were ebbing from her gentle lips. Her old attendant, with tear-streaming eyes, was propping her in bed, whispering in broken accents her words of consolation.

"She had known consumptive people recover after such catastrophes—the weather was favourable for invalids—perhaps it would relieve her chest—she must not despair."

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Poor Clementina! she did not despair; she was prepared to die. "Not yet, though; not yet," she exclaimed. "Oh my poor father—" she could not add another word until her faded brows were refreshed.

Bidding at length the attendant to throw a large loose robe over her, she begged that the Duke of Guise should be summoned.

"Henri," she exclaimed, smiling sweetly as he entered the room—"Henri, it is the first time you have been in my room. I thought not to send for you myself, but now that we are alone (for the attendant had retired) repeat again your words—injure not my father. I am very, very ill, Henri. Nay, I cannot live long: humour me now; do not be angry with me."

"Angry!" cried Henri, and he approached to encircle her in his arms, but a modest blush covered her pale cheeks; she waved her thin hand so majestically, that he retreated.

"Nay, nay, take not advantage of my illness," she said, rather bitterly. "You would

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not have been here, but for the certainty I feel I cannot live. God knows, I wish to forgive you, but Henri—Henri—you have fearfully embittered my young life. I am young—young to die. I shall care less to leave the world when the rites of the Church have obliterated the shame which remorseless men dare cast o'er my unsullied reputation. Thought you not how dear fame is to a virtuous woman, when you thus took me away from those of my own sex, to abide here your pleasure? And now, hear your sentence. You *must* marry me, if you have one spark of manly feeling left; you *must* and you shall hear my vows! But, Henri, my heart is not, never will, in life or death, be yours!"

Her eyes were upraised; her fair tresses were in beautiful disorder around her shoulders; and so lovely did she look in her wrath, that Henti sank upon his knees.

"Clementina, I dare not ask your forgiveness. I have sinned passing woman's forgive-

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ness; but here, humbled, sorrowful, wretched —I sue for your pity. Let me press you once, only once, to a heart aching as much as your own. Let me pillow upon my breast your throbbing temples."

Clementina wept aloud; for she could not fail, poor dying girl, of being touched by Henri's devotion; yet after a pause, she dried her tears, and again she waved her hand, for her lover was once more approaching.

"I sent not for you for this, Henri; go, leave me; I shall be dressed—dressed in my bridal robe—ere noon. Now repeat your oath, and go; leave me."

And, passive as an infant, the gay Duke dared not disobey that gentle, yet commanding girl. He repeated the words she imposed. Not even by one kiss was his obedience rewarded. Slowly and sorrowfully he left that chamber, seeing too clearly all was lost.

Sad and painful, tediously long, was that bridal toilette. Clementina was too proud to

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kneel in disorder as the Duchess of Guise, and she went through a lengthened process with all the resigned patience and lofty dignity which characterized her.

Painful, too, were her words to her only attendant.

"Thou art but an unhandy lady's-maid, albeit a good nurse. See you not where those once bright ringlets should be placed? There—there—well, never mind; look not awry; though many attendants await me at my ducal castle, thou shalt be my last attendant! Dost understand me? And hark! mind my words: seek my father when the last stroke is placed to my toilette, and tell him his heart would have broken to see me, so I send him my last greeting." The attendant turned aside and wept. "Haste!" cried Clementina, "or I shall faint! Bring the satin dress—bah! how large it is; surely this silver net will hang strangely over it. There, invent some handicraft—stuff me with wool around—do anything! but send me not forth

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such a mummy, for the Duke to repent him of his choice. Gracious! am I to encircle all those diamonds around me? It is at best but a wearisome task."

The old attendant liked not the hilarity of the weak voice, nor the brightness of the eye; she apprehended more than she dared express, and her trembling hands almost refused to proceed. Long and tedious was the manœuvring by which the attenuated ravages of that once faultless form were concealed. But yet it wanted ten minutes to the time for the ceremony, when the veil and orange wreath were brought. Henri had sent for these to Paris, and the sight of the veil recalled the recollection of the one which poor Lorretta had brought into Queen Catherine de Médicis' sitting-room. Once more, and for the last time, Clementina burst into a flood of tears; and amidst that last anguish of the heart, many —many scenes passed in quick succession across her mind: even Poltrot de Méré's form, dying

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as she had seen it last, came to bid the spiritless girl both a farewell and a greeting.

"Never, never wish to be above your station," said Clementina, turning to the old woman; greatness brings care and sorrow. Perhaps now, some merry, blithe-hearted village girl, is so joyously preparing for her bridal morn—and I—I. Ah! I have yet five minutes; bring me that vase of flowers—I will make myself a bouquet!"

It was affecting to see that faded, yet exquisitely lovely girl, wreathing together flowers blooming, whilst she would no more bloom.

"I have always loved flowers," she said, smiling artlessly; "and yet, save that I have scarcely had any girl-like feelings, I have felt prematurely old; and I am tired, yet still unwilling to leave the world. There, my diamond necklace has fallen again; surely it is an ominous sign! You must tie it with a thread, for my thin throat is no support for it."

The hands of the clock now went swiftly

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round: it wanted but two minutes to the time. Alas! prepared as she was, if possible, that sweet face grew paler; and the quivering lips could scarcely part to utter the words still lingering there. She cast her eyes around, as if taking a farewell of her chamber; and suddenly taking her attendant's dry hands in her own, she looked searchingly, earnestly, at her, as she said—

"Hearken to me, faithful, kind-hearted woman. Something within me tells me I shall never, never see my ducal home. You must not let the ill-natured world say what it pleases. You have never left me; and you know that, however I cannot love the Duke, I cannot reproach him of any want of respect and propriety, since he took me from Paris. Testify to this, albeit the rich and the great should dare to speak against my good name. You have been a mother—fancy I am your child."

"And a sweet, and fair, and good child, truly," said the matron, arranging once more the soft tresses. "Fear not; you are not so

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near your end; but fear less to leave your name in my hands. Should Queen Catherine herself tell me to hold my tongue, I would but speak the louder."

"Nay, nay, be not rash, I pray you; believe me, it is no easy task to contend with Catherine de Médicis. It is as easy to bid the Seine turn to dry land, as to bid her vengeance be tarried."

"Poor young lady! I am sure you have suffered; but still, let me tell you, there seems nothing so very dreadful in marrying the Duke. See—see—he is giving directions in the court-yard below; see how his diamond buckles and diamond-hilted sword glisten in the sun's rays! A pity you should not like him."

It was quite useless to explain to the well-intentioned but simple woman, that her love was buried with the dead. She did not, however, go to the window, and the old woman continuing there, Clementina poured out a glass of refreshing medicine, and smiled faintly as

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she looked at the long row of phials on the table.

"Poor Monsieur Baptiste," she said; "if medicine could aught avail, there lacketh no display here. Give Monsieur Baptiste this diamond ring from me. Nay, nay, I hear his voice: call him up—I will speak to him in the next room."

Her nerves temporarily strengthened by the draught she had just taken, enabled her to sustain, with apparent firmness, the conference. She rather gave her opinion than asked her physician's, whilst, laying her tiny hands on her chest, she said—"All, all is written there. Thank you, dear doctor, for all your attention. It must be soothing, in your trying position, to hear it expressed that you have cheered your patient. You have tried all that skill can do, Monsieur Baptiste, but a broken heart has baffled you."

"Dear young lady, who knows? Youth is on your side."

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"And sorrow, and care, and wrong also, kind doctor; you know now you are speaking against your heart. Tell me now, is there anything I can do for you? At all events, wear this as a little remembrance of me; and when I am low, low in the grave, shed a tear to my memory."

Even the grave doctor was struck with the particular expression, almost angelic in its innocent purity. He could not answer the direct questions placed to him, but at that moment the village bells struck up a merry peal.

Clementina turned ghastly pale. "Silly, silly girl," she exclaimed, rallying with a faint smile, "it will soon be over. I beg you will wait here, dear doctor. I am not quite coiffed. I will return to you in a moment, and I will lean upon your arm. I am not strong enough to walk down stairs without support."

The physician only pressed her hand in silent assent, and Clementina retired and rejoined her attendant. "Now, now," she cried, affecting

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a gaiety she did not feel. "Now, good woman, heed well thy occupation, and place the finishing stroke to my bridal array. I will try and adjust the veil myself; but I fear me I cannot. Strange vanity! I fain would look well upon my bridal day."

And, oh, she did look well; she did look surpassingly lovely! those golden-hued ringlets brightly drooping round her snowy neck. It seemed as if for that morning's ceremony all her wonted beauty had returned; not so brilliant, not so splendid, but gracefully, entrancingly lovely. And those sweet lips parted to laugh faintly, as surveying herself, Clementina saw how, by dint of hoops, and the richness of her skirts, looped up with white rose garlands, her slight form had a majestic appearance; but no dress could impart the charming beauty of that expressive countenance, clear, painfully clear, inasmuch as the too vivid rose on the cheeks of lily whiteness told its own tale. Her large blue eyes appeared languidly swimmingly

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in lustre, and the fringy lashes rested in calmest, sweetest beauty on her hectic glowing cheek.

"Now bind the orange wreath round my tresses," she said to the attendant; "I cannot lift my hands so high. How very faint I feel; have you no restorative near you?"

The old woman went in search of one, and Clementina feebly fell on her knees. Her white dress hung in graceful folds around her, and the veil streamed over her form; she buried her face in her hands, and she prayed.

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The splendid carriage, almost equal to the Medicis' newly-built one,* was waiting to take Clementina to the castle of the Duke—*her* home. The servants in their gorgeous trappings were talking in groups in the court-yard. And Clementina knelt at the altar by the side of the young Duke; who, in his superb golden

* Carriages were first in use in France in this reign.

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laced Court dress, with his glittering sword, the hilt all spangled with diamonds, and his Mecklin lace ruffs, was as handsome as a maiden's heart would wish her bridegroom to look.

The Cardinal de Lorraine, in his richest robes, held his gilded book in his hands. His face was pale, and his lips quivered. He turned over the leaves in search of a place he knew well where to find.

Not a sound disturbed the silence of the room which had been fitted up for the occasion. The Cardinal looked round as if he fain would like *something* to occur; anything, save unite that deadly pale bride, who, with hands clasped on her bosom, awaited with a cheerless, unsmiling countenance, the beginning of the ceremony. Lower, and lower, the wreathed head bent on the desk of the high-backed chair; and in a low, solemn voice she uttered the binding vow.

"I *am* your bride now," she murmured in

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the ears of the Duke; "I *am* your *wedded* wife."

The Duke turned round to kiss the fair face which had sunk on his shoulder. He raised the bridal veil; he expected to see a blush, and his eyes met the fixed gaze of a lifeless corpse!

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The midnight hour again approached; it chimed its time dully on the air, and echoed with cheerless, doleful sound on the ears of a fond father, who knelt weeping, beside the couch on which a pale corpse lay, all attired in bridal white. The orange flowers, the badges of a ceremony to which death alone had answered Amen, were still around the glossy tresses. There was a hallowed look about that cold, young face, and no hands seemed pure enough to disrobe it, so there it lay encircled in the trimmings of fashion; and the waxen tapers shed

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their mournful light on it. Lorraine knelt side by side with the Astrologer; he held a crucifix in his hands. At the foot of the bed, nearly as pale as the corpse itself, with dishevelled hair, with up-clasped hands, and tear-streaming eyes, knelt the bridegroom, whose hopes had been defeated, even at the foot of the altar. Not a sound save his own sobs disturbed the stillness of the chamber, for Pettura was too stern in his grief to find relief in tears; whilst Lorraine had more than once knelt by the death-bed of youth and beauty, aad therefore there was calm enough to pray.

Hope there was none! for when death comes, Hope's sunny wings ply elsewhere their gossamer lightness. All felt convinced that Clementina's pure soul was at peace, in the haven of everlasting rest, and yet they prayed; but *not* for Clementina—they prayed for their own sinful hearts.

At length the Duke arose from his knees, and he glided close to Pettura's side; he placed

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his cold hand on his, and he said in faltering accents—"Forgive me! forgive me." For a moment Pettura hesitated; it was an impressive sight to watch the strong man's sorrow struggling with sympathy, and still more affecting to see the young Duke bowing his pride, the inherent pride of his noble family, and speaking in mild grief.

"Thou *art*, thou *wert*, my child's husband, Henri of Guise; let us be friends."

It seemed then as if the spirit of the departed had caught the sound of those words. Henri fancied a smile hovered round his death-stricken bride, and his grief was less agonizing to bear.

At length Pettura too arose from his knees. He pressed his child's face in that last sad farewell embrace which the fond living bestow on the dead, and silently he cut off two shining tresses of those flowing curls: one he placed in his own bosom, the other he handed to Henri.

With passionate tears—with sighs so deep

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that they shook his frame—the Duke seized the treasure; and taking up the cold hand, he kissed it, saying, "let her keep her *wedding* ring."

Deep were the sobs which lulled the death slumbers of Clementina Pettura, as there she lay so pale, but beautiful even in death's grasp. What an awful lesson of the evanescing tenure of all human happiness was this to the young and buoyant Duke! How plaintively soft were the words which he recollected had fallen from the tongue of the now lifeless girl—how she had raised the heads of the drooping flowers —how she had called herself the twin-sister of air. Then the Duke *did* as he had been bidden by her, commune with nature's beauty; and he wandered not alone, for at early dawn Pettura joined him, and their conversation was such as might be expected, drawn from the fount of the same sorrow, which occupied both their hearts.

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CHAPTER IV.

Could the repentance of the living atone to the dead for the injuries or persecution they have too often received in their lifetime, this compensation would often fall to their share. When the cold lips are mute—when the eye is sunken and dim—when the nearest relation would be at a loss to recognise the withered and altered features, then indeed compensation comes too late. Then how often tardy justice is done to the memory of beings to whom justice can no longer bring weal or wo. Statues are raised to the memory of heroes who were sacrificed

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at the shrine of their fellow-men's ambition. Statesmen are applauded, who in their lifetime withered under the opprobrium of following unlawful politics. Poets have effigies and tablets raised to them, and their name is borne triumphantly from mouth to mouth, whilst in their lifetime they vainly mounted their Pegasus.

Thus goes the world, paying more attention to the memory of the dead, than to the comforts of the living.

An author whose volumes in his lifetime slumber in unmolested quietude on the shelves of a bookseller's shop, may assure himself that as soon as he is dead, he will be called a "divinely-souled being," a rival of the productions of Walter Scott, a second Dickens; he will have the pathos of Bulwer, the harmony of a Campbell or Keat; in fact, every author, living or deceased, will form a component part of his merits. In lifetime men hardly give "The Devil his due," but after death they give the

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deceased *more* than his meed, with proper interest for keeping him so long waiting.

Your pardon, gentle readers, for getting in a freer turn, and pardon too to the world, for speaking scoffingly of the justice of its opinions; whilst here my own unworthy production must stand the test of its leniency, and even *after* death *my* Pegasus* may have cantered in vain.

Good patience! what a host of Heathen Gods an author need call to his existence, before he feels a *l'abri descoups du monde;* of what a degree of ultra nervousness must his frame be composed before he can send his Æolian harp to the breeze, and not care which notes the wind will awaken.

"Pro and con." so often change places, that con. is generally the victorious side; and an author may sometimes feel so dispirited at the unfavourable result of a work (judged in his *lifetime,* remember, kind readers), that in dis-

* Vide certain unfortunate Poems.

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burdening his heavily laden brain: and he is tempted to exclaim, with all due humility, "*Peccavi, Peccavi!*" "There is rest in Heaven," says the Latin Poverb (*in cælo quies*); and verily an Author's Allegro begins sometimes after a dull reign of "*Il Penseroso,*" followed by what musicians call "*Dolente ad libitum.*"

For the benefit of those young beings who, like myself, are daring enough to enter the list of "literary *hardships,*" I will tell them what mythological gods come to their Court, when their *mind* "holds a levee." Then, a truce to this long prologue, which (a pity we cannot love our neighbour as well as ourselves) relates too much to "number one." It is strictly classical to begin with Minerva (because an author likes to think his manuscript has found favour with that goddess). Lead her all smiling to a sort of *Hesperian* region (a kingdom of my coining), holding a *beau milieu,* between an Olympus and a Tartarus; your locality is easily

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explained. To lead our Minerva at once to an Olympus would hardly suit her, insomuch that wisdom likes to *pave* her way, not fall (like a colonel raised by promotion,) too suddenly into great happiness.

Tell Minerva that your kingdom is guarded by Hesperides, and that you have golden apples which are beyond your reach, unless she helps you by her wisdom to pluck them. She will shake her head gravely (a type of friends reading your manuscript), and she will tell you that you must have patience. Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhynia, Thalia and Urania (namely, Eloquence, Lyric Fancy, Poetry, Tragedy, Mirth, Music, Rhetoric, and Astronomy), are summoned from Apollo's Court to come to your levee. Whilst Minerva talks of patience, *they*, holding up her train, by their inspiring mirth inspire *you* with an irresistible wish of being impetuous, and you thirst for the golden apples. This brings you to the period when your publisher is lei-

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surely reading your work, and forming his well-digested opinions of its merit—you, of course, thinking his wisdom intolerably slow.

Your publisher—(I beg pardon, I forgot I was high in the classics)—your Ulysses of consummate wisdom, having read and *approved* of your manuscript, you fancy you have attained the golden apples. Patience *pas encore*. There are Penates besides guardian ones, and your neighbour's lares are not always your own. The lares of the streets, the towns and countries, are sometimes as unpropitious to you as if they abetted the fabulous sphinx, and your immediate friends warn you of the body of the dog, the tail of a serpent, the wings of a bird, the paws of a lion, concentrated in the human voice—the Public. Minerva is too wise to be hasty, and you suffer heart-aches, and head-aches, and fits of impatience, and sympathetic nervousness, and—*mais c'en est assez*, before your Ulysses produces your work in the glory of *three volumes*. If the Harpies reign, there is next a

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famine in the land, and in the dearth, men want better food than your mental nutriment; they will carry away the provisions from the dainty table of Phineas, but they will not carry off your three pet volumes from the bookseller's shelves.

You are in a sort of Elysium, and you have no Achilles to conduct you to Troy. Ancient heroes would fight to rescue the beauty of their age; but were you, sister authors, as fair as the lovely Helen, there are few Diomedes now who will (at the risk of excommunication from grand-fathers, grand-mothers, great-aunts, and great-uncles, brothers, sisters, and friends, who pronounce your work a pile of insipidity) rescue your writing from oblivion.

Parthenope and her sister Syrens now come to your levee, and they talk in such a melodious voice, that your heart buoys with hope (a new edition with a different title-page in perspective); it seems as if some fairy had touched you with an Orpheus'-wand, making printers,

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binders, and publishers, dance with a *Polka*-toed nimbleness, as they *advertise*, and *admir-ize*, and raise your work to an Atlas height. Sappho composed nine books, whilst you, without being stimulated to lyrics, epigrams, and elegaics, by the love of Phaon, may now write as quickly as you please. You have earned your reputation, and need not stand on a Leucadia, and perish in the sea. Yet as I before said, if you *are* unsuccessful, as soon as you *die* (oh balmy consolation), Lesbians will rise to pay your memory a Sappho-like tribute; and, instead of money stamped with her image, they will obtain your picture, drawn, of course, just as you were merging into ugliness; because, to have drawn you when you were young, would have made you vain. The famous painter of Rhodes, the persevering Protogenes, slumbered in oblivion, until, at length, Apelles came to Rhodes, and, admiring his productions, the public chose also to admire him.

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Readers, fair young sister authors, this event took place 328 years before Christ. Let us then say that our world is no worse with regard to authors and aspirants to public fame, than it was many long years back.

Now sum up my mythological theory. If you court the poetical deity with her open wings and her blowing trumpet; if you pillow her slumbers with the dreams of the Nine Sisters; if you lave her at the fount where naiad virgins lean on the urn of pure water; if you sing her *réveillé* in a syren's voice; if you lend her the grace of a Thalia, clothing her in liberality, eloquence, and wisdom; if you endow her mind with actions great as the twelve labours of Hercules; if, like Jupiter and Juno's daughter, you make your pet Fame a Hebe of beauty, crowned with flowers, and lightly clad; then to make the *tableau* of your Hebe complete, you must place a vase in her hands; and remember, young authors, that your Hebe's vase will not always be filled with

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the nectar of admiration and triumph; but that a Midas-like portion of attention may fall into the vase, whose proportions are large enough to receive a Phrygian share of corn and wine. The Gorgons had the power of transforming those who guarded the golden fruit into stone, and so the public will not always walk with your work in a Castor and Pollux proximity. Thus, sister authors, the pinnacle on which we stand is not one to be much envied. There are trials of patience, deep and and many to endure. There are some who deem themselves reflected, when the author is not intentionally personal. In fact, thorns arise where the fervid heart of youth has imagined that flowers of Eden-growth are blooming.

Now, farewell; in the words of the song—

"The spell is broken, and we must part!"

part at least on this subject. But to return to my tale.

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CHAPTER V.

General Tavannes, Mariot, and the escort of soldiers had now taken possession of the chateau of the Duke of Guise. The Duke's retainers made a feeble effort to keep their master's premises from invasion; they drew up the portcullis, raised every bolt and bar, until the Jester, fearing that bloodshed would ensue, behaved in a manner which stamped him a second Puss in Boots, or a *first*, perhaps; for from *bien dire*, I do not know if "Puss in Boots" was published in those days. His companion, Mariot, was transformed into a Mar-

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quis of Carrabas, as Joseph, advancing towards the portcullis, blew through a shrill speaking trumpet, his wish of speaking to the head steward, or retainer of the Duke's household. That important personage came bare-headed to meet his very respectable colleague, who thus began a treaty which did honour to a man wearing armour, instead of the fool's bells; or rather, it showed plainly that steel cannot hide a knave."

"My good friend, you are, methinks, the steward of the Duke's household."

"I am," was the answer, with a bow, which would have honoured a Michau's tuition.

"*Pardi!* I should have known it; the Duke, your master, described you so well."

"You come then in amity. Why, then, those armed men? Why come you in so military an array?"

"Simply to represent part of the *corps de garde* of the French King's Court, who intends adding to the splendour of the Duke's ap-

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proaching marriage. We thought the Duke had already arrived from—"

"From where?" said the steward; "for, by all the saints dead and living, we know no more where our young master is, than the man in the moon."

"Perhaps he knows better than you do," said the Jester; who, for all his assumed gravity, could not resist a jest. "Perhaps he knows far better than you; for you must remember that his Majesty of the moon has an extensive view of the haunts of men."

"I thought you just now began telling me where the Duke was."

"I am a dull scholar, and never remember words. I began my sentence, thinking you would perhaps have the goodness to finish it for me. I am something like the cuckoo, who never builds a nest, because it prefers taking possession of that of another bird. *Pardi!* you will find me a merry companion, and we must needs quarter here until the Duke chooses

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to make his appearance, which he will as soon as my master, the great and valiant General Mariot, despatches a messenger in all directions to fetch him home."

"Where is thy master?"

"La! man, thou must be as dull as a calf's head with the brains removed, not to be able to distinginguish a General at a bird's-eye view. Don't you see how heedlessly he holds his arms? He don't care to protect himself, not he; all he cares for is his trusty courser, true Arabia breed; came over from Palestine (if that be in Arabia). The great Mogul, or the the King of the Cannibal Islands, or the Sultan of ——, I forget the name, but some great man, whose grandfather was great before him, rode on it, and at last my master bought it for a great sum of money."

"Your master is a traveller, then?"

"I believe you he is; he has been through Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; he has discovered islands (so he has, on the map,

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thought the Jester). I cannot tell you all he has *not* done; his courage is *surpassed* by his wonderful learning."

No wonder the steward, who was a simple white-haired old man, was touched at the idea of entertaining a guest of such quality. The draw-bridge was raised, the portcullis was thrown widely open, and Tavannes concealed with difficulty a loud burst of laughter, when the Jester pointed to Mariot, exclaiming: "My master, the valiant General Mariot."

Mariot supported himself under this unwelcome introduction; for although this want of truth sadly galled him, he remembered that the fearful odds of a sanguinary rencontre were in the balance.

Marshalled in with all due honour, Tavannes was conducted to be, or thought, a lieutenant in his train; whilst Mariot's unwieldy body received the obsequious bows of the liveried servants who came to receive their master's guest, and a General who had fought in the four

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quarters of the globe. Thus Mariot earned the reputation of a warrior, because he had held a gun, which reminds me of those persons who, touching for an hour the *terra-firma* of Boulogne, talk of having been on the Continent.

Capons, rounds of beef, dishes of all kinds, wine in abundance, huge pasties, were hastily collected; and soon the board groaned beneath the hospitable fare. Mariot ate sparingly, feeling that he was a tacit approver of a falsehood. Tavannes ate abundantly, because he thought "To-day we live, to-morrow we die." Joseph ate till he could hardly move from table, from no philosophy whatever, save that he was hungry, which, after all was the best philosophy; although anchorites, who lose their appetites by long fasts, and the noxious food they take, talk so grandly of the virtue of starving. It is like a man taking the pledge of teetotalism, on the principle that he cannot take wine without the danger of an attack of apoplexy.

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"Bless me," cried Joseph, as he swallowed a large glass of sherbet; "if this is not living on the plan of 'Live well, and keep out the doctor,' I do not know what is. How do you like it, General?"

"Do not speak to me, sirrah."

"Ha! ha! ha! I am blessed if Mariot does not begin to think he *is* the General," said the Jester, in a whisper to Tavannes, who had insisted on his sitting at table with him, which invitation Joseph accepted, saying, "He had often sat down with his brother, the King of France."

"You are hardy, to call the King your brother; you, who are his fool."

"And pray, General Tavannes, (your pardon, General Mariot) what is the difference between the King of France and a fool? He is earning his bells as fast as he well can, whilst I have long worn them. The King is as much a fool already as the eldest son of a Duke is one in idea; insomuch, as he only

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waits with tolerable patience to take his father's place."

"Thank goodness, I have no son."

"And if you had, brave Signor, a Generalship is not hereditary, only catching sometimes." Here Joseph looked at Mariot.

"You are making *maigre, chère,*" he continued, looking at Mariot; "a stranger coming in, to see you look so doleful, would think you were at the expense of the banquet."

"I wish I were; it would be honestly procured," said the man of scruples.

"I am sure it is honest enough, when the steward invited us in, and the servants wait upon us so submissively."

"Monsieur Mariot means he would rather have had a fight and earn the repast, *par conquête de guerre,*" said the General.

"I—I—I am not very hungry," replied poor Mariot, swallowing a tart at a mouthful, which exertion brought on a severe fit of coughing, which threatened to deprive him of the

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power of again performing such a dexterous feat.

"Ha! ha! ha! the enemy's food is too hard for your honest heart, Monsieur Mariot. I never knew before that a wise man's mastication and digestion were so bad. What is the reason of it, General Tavannes?"

"I suppose the tart did not savour classically."

"No! I dare say not," said Joseph; "there were not sufficient ingredients to compose the whole pasty; and one part of speech wanting, makes it go down the wrong way. Take a glass of wine, Monsieur Mariot, and I will pledge you, and all such valiant Generals, who sit at home, reposing from their warlike toils, after winning their laurels."

"I have not won any," said Mariot; "you know I have not."

"More silly you; the conquest was easy enough; there were laurel bushes in abundance, and you might have plucked a few leaves here

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and there, as types at least of a martial promenade. What is the use of being so extremely scrupulous? When Princes are little boys, and they go and shoot, the game-keeper strews dead birds in their way, and the young Royalists will sometimes fancy they *have* shot them, until they persuade themselves it is the truth."

"I never persuade myself that a falsehood is veracity."

"Oh, no, I am sure not," said the Jester, rather nettled; "you know champagne from '*vin ordinaire*;' but you drink the latter *moderato* in company, and the former *con gusto e spirito*, when no one is near."

Mariot did not swallow champagne or *vin ordinaire*, but he was forced to swallow the insinuation.

It is curious to think how free men can sometimes make of their neighbours' goods. Notwithstanding Mariot felt as ill-placed in the chateau of the Duke as a cat would be chained to a dog's kennel, still he found the smooth

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bed prepared for his Generalship, far better than he imagined an encampment outside the portcullis would have been; and, if it be right to pray for peace, Mariot certainly prayed so fervently, that had he been kneeling on Roman ground, the gates of the Temple of Peace might have had a chance of having their rusty gates opened. With an Ode to Peace yet trembling on his lips, Mariot slept. So much for the exalted courage of a General!

As to Tavannes, he was so accustomed to take castles by *storm*, that to have comfortable quarters in one, without even loading a gun, was such an extraordinary freak of fortune, that he laughed heartily at the adventure; thinking that when the blows came, it would be like dessert after dinner, from which he could abstain without feeling better or worse. At the same time he enjoyed, beyond measure, the facetious jokes of the King's jester, and owned that though "the tongue is a little member," Joseph had found his particularly serviceable,

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since it had better contributed to open the gates of a castle than any force of arms.

"What a beautiful place it is," exclaimed Tavannes, surveying the rich tapestry on the walls, and the beautifully carved oaken ceiling.

"How beautiful the mouse thinks the wired palace, with its tempting bait," said Joseph. "I wonder if that poor timorous Mariot will sleep?"

"Why, you do not think we are in any particular danger just now, do you?"

"Not now, oh, no; I am sure the steward looks honest enough, and he is sensible too. How soon he recognised that he was speaking to a gentleman."

"What! dost call thyself a gentleman?"

"Of course I do! The moment a man has shaken hands with a gentleman he is one himself. Your Generalship has only to shake hands with me, and you may style yourself one directly!"

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"I have shaken hands with less honest men."

"I don't know that; you do not call thieves honest men?"

"But you are not a thief, merry fool!"

"Your pardon, for contradicting your sapient wisdom, which flows almost as glibly as Mariot's, only it is all spoken in one language. Your pardon, I am a desperate thief. I steal time as if it belonged to me; whilst it is neither yours, mine, nor the King's, nor any one's. It belongs to every one, and to no one; and I rob my Royal brother of the portion of it his lady mother calls his own, when, instead of learning politics, His Majesty is listening to my wisdom. I rob authors, too, the same as I rob Mariot of his Latin. I tell him, all donkies feed on the same fodder; and if I were not sometimes munching from the same nettle-bush, *ma foi!* Mariot might prick up his ears and refuse to own a brother."

"You *ought* to be proud of such a General, Joseph!"

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"Yes, he has retired, overwhelmed with honours, like the chevaliers who feel their golden *eperons* rather too heavy to bear. But let me tell you, General, that Mariot is about as brave as many a man of pigmy courage who keeps hovering round an army, giving plenty of commands, and reserving the privilege of flying all to himself. I would rather be a soldier, than some of the chevaliers who earn a golden fame. The trumpet which sounds one man's praise never cares if its shrill note speaks against another. A less honest man than Mariot might follow up the game and be called a General in good earnest; therefore he is doubly a fool, an eccentric fool, wishing to be honest whilst all the world are the contrary."

In such conversation as this the evening passed, and at length Joseph found that his liberal potations were making him more sleepy than merry. At his request he was shown to a sleeping apartment, and there he reasoned much to this effect—

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"*L'habit fait l'homme;*" and if I prefer the saying in French than in English, my dear countrymen acknowledge that you prefer the *tournure* of *à l'habit Français;* there, then, especially, "*l'habit fait l'homme.*" I remember reading, or rather learning, during my school days, some admirable verses addressed, "*A mon habit.*" I cannot now remember their versification further than they *begin*—

"Oh mon cher habit,
Comme je te remercie;"

which is as bad as when nurses drawl forth—

"On the tree top
The cradle will rock,"

and leave off the moment the child whom they are nursing falls to sleep. At least, however, I will claim the premium over the nursery genius, inasmuch as I perfectly remember the substantial meaning of the lines, namely, that

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such is man's blind folly, that the man of genius was lost until the dexterous hand of his tailor transformed him into a man of fashion. Then he recounts the unexpected success he met with, thanking his coat in due form, and ending each verse with a praise *to cloth*. Poets have written to ladies' lips, to ladies' faces; they have written sonnets to birds, sonnets to flowers, sonnets to faithful dogs, and sonnets to faithless lovers; but to write to broad-cloth, no *lady* poet would be guilty of such *broad* poetry. *Mais l'habit fait l'homme* is as trite as it is old; and how much the gay and gallant ones they admire are indebted for grace to their coats, they would laughingly think of, if they had perused that amusing little sketch. The idea of recommending a poem, and forgetting its author, is very much like the fox saying the grapes were too sour, whilst they are pendant and beautiful above his head. The words of the poem are hovering round my lips; and as I cannot recollect them, I am tempted to follow

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the example of the cunning fox, and say, "The poem was not *worth* remembering."—(Behind the scenes—which will serve for reynard and myself—it was very beautiful.)

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CHAPTER VI.

Mariot and Tavannes held a long conversation the next day, to take into consideration the next movement they were to adopt. It was worse than useless to call the Jester to the parley; for he was so pleased with his own wit, in having gained admittance to the castle, and so intoxicated with the liberty they enjoyed, that he would not hear of leaving it. One plan was formed, and then another; but still no certain one was taken, for Mariot seemed almost bewildered; and even his Latin citations seemed to have taken their flight elsewhere.

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Poor Mariot! how he longed to be safely in his snuggery, instead of the castle of the Duke. He felt hungry and could not eat; he was almost as bad as the crane, who was invited to a sumptuous feast, but found his bill would not contain the food.

It was noon: the beautiful grounds of the chateau, watered by the meandering Seine, invited the lovers of harmony to court its delvy groves. A bright sun glowed in the horizon; all was so beautiful, but Tavannes and Mariot felt in an uncomfortable situation, and could not admire the works of Nature, whilst uncertainty hung over their steps. Suddenly the martial ear of Tavannes, so practised in the sounds, heard the trampling of horses, far off in the distance.

"If that be the Duke," he said to Mariot, "he comes very slowly. I know so well the paces of horses, and now——. How pale you are, man; it is no use dallying; call the men," he said to an officer who stood in the room;

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"we will go and meet the Duke. We can shake hands in the open air and deliver our King's message, or, if needs be, we have more chance of retaking the fair Clementina there by his side."

Mariot trembled in every limb, and he longed to secrete himself in the castle, but he had not the courage, or cowardice (which word is best?) to utter his wish. Before he actually had collected himself, he was on horseback by Tavannes; and the latter, seeing his companion was as pale as a spectre and as silent as an Egyptian mummy, now took upon himself the control of the little band.

Presently the trampling of the horses appeared nearer; but to a less experienced ear than Tavannes' it was plain they came slowly. Then a soft, but very mournful music, broke upon the air.

"The Duke's taste for music is all in the melancholy style," whispered the Jester.

"Silence!" said Mariot, imperiously; and

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Joseph knew not why, but this time no jocose answer rose to his lips.

Still, on the balmy air that plaintive strain was heard, and from a thicket of trees, which skirted either side of the picturesque road, a most impressive sight met the gaze of Mariot and his band. The Duke's troops advanced, followed by his servants, their arms reversed, and their pace slow, whilst the Cardinal de Lorraine, bareheaded, walked before a coffin carried on men's shoulders, and covered with a snowy cloth, on which was placed a wreath of orange flowers. The young Duke of Guise held a handkerchief to his weeping eyes, and Tavannes had time to sign to his men, who retreated immediately at a rapid gallop.

All left; all save one chevalier, clad in armour, and wearing a closely-drawn vizor. This chevalier was of small stature; he bounded nimbly from his horse, and running towards the coffin, threw himself on it with a piercing cry.

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The Duke, in a hoarse voice, exclaimed—"How dare you touch the coffin?"

"Henri of Guise, do you not know me?" said a soft and plaintive voice.

Henri approached; he drew up his vizor, and exclaimed—"Good Heavens, it is Marguerite of Navarre!"

"Ay, ay, I asked Mariot to bring me to you, and he would not. He knows not what an afflicted woman can do. I am weary, I am faint—this heavy armour sits uneasily on my frame, take me into your castle and then hear my prayer."

The Duke drew down her vizor, lest the curious should see the bold and indecorous step the young Queen had taken, and he approached the portcullis of his castle.

"Your pardon, my liege," said Mariot, offering his sword to the Duke; "I came here to do the King's bidding—to return to him with—"

"Man, man, utter not her name; I cannot

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bear it. Do you think an earthly king should have made me surrender my treasure—my pearl of precious price? There she lies, there, as I point to that coffin; there, there, is all that remains of my beautiful bride! But she *was* my bride; and let any one speak disparagingly of her if they dare. Now go thee back, Mariot, and tell the King that next time I see him, I shall come to lay my bride in her grave; she shall slumber where my ancestors slumber, and every respect shall be paid to her memory."

"Had *you* not better return to your Royal brother," said he, turning in a whisper to Marguerite.

The young Queen paused. Henri of Guise *had* been married, but he had no longer a bride; surely it was not proper for her to linger after that. She left the Duke's arm, and she approached Mariot, who started when he heard the words—

"I am the Queen of Navarre; take me back with you."

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"Henri of Guise, promise me one thing," she said, whilst tears gushed from her beautiful eyes; "promise me that I shall see Clementina's remains consigned to her last rest."

"She loved you well; yes, yes, I promise it; and now farewell. If you are unhappy, do not despair; it is death alone which sends away hope. Think of those who are far less happy than yourself—think of me."

"Ah, Henri! it is woman, fond, trusting woman, who feels real unhappiness under sorrow. Men have so many things to occupy their attention; it is to woman belongs weeping; tears, warm, deep, passionate man can forget."

She said no more, but pressing Henri of Guise's extended hand, she followed Mariot, who had neither courage or inclination to reprimand or wonder, for the Princess's scalding tears fell on her steel-gloved hand.

"Poor little Queen!" thought Mariot; "how soon her summer's mirth is changed to winter

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sadness. How changed are her feelings which so lately had a child's buoyancy. Oh, sorrow! thou vast heirloom of mortality, thy bitter hand spares neither the young nor the beautiful; thou art not a slave, going or coming at any-one's bidding; thou canst pierce the palace wall, or thou canst find a dwelling-place in the cottager's lowly dome. Happiness fleets as a bright midsummer dream, and happy indeed are those who embark on a sunny lake with the full conviction that its still waters can be changed into a tempestuous sea; that the skies may be obscured, and the dark surges may roar.

Yes! happy are those who amidst prosperity, know and feel that a night can set, a cloudy night, when no star can guide the bark of human hope to the sunny shore of happiness.

The young Queen of Navarre recalled all the sweet and holy converse she had held with Clementina; and no wonder her tears flowed at the recollection, that her pure spirit had now left the earth.

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"Monsieur Mariot," she said, in a sweet and solemn tone, "it is passing strange that some persons do not believe in a future happiness. How could I bear the troubles of life, if I directed not my thoughts to a higher world?"

"But if those unhappy persons are prosperous, have you ever reflected, young Queen, how little they can enjoy even this life, which they blindly believe is the highest point of bliss?"

"I never thought of this before; but it is a wise observation. It is so sweet to be grateful for any favour received; but how doubly sweet when the soul is raised in thankfulness to our great Creator!"

"Beautiful thought!" replied Mariot, surveying with pious rapture that young and enthusiastic countenance. "May your Majesty ever preserve a lasting foundation of religion, built on a rock which cannot be driven away by the eddy of the wind."

"Alas! alas!" replied the Queen, "I some-

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times feel most strangely wavering; my temperament is so extremely impulsive, that ways and means are secondary when I obtain my end."

"Impulse is often the daughter of imprudence," said Mariot; "and those hearts, especially young hearts, who follow blindly the impulse of their feelings, will often take a most fallacious view of the world. *Their* hearts are warm and glowing, and they erroneously fancy they can inspire others with the same enthusiastic throbbing."

"You are right," said the Queen; and the warm blood mounted to her face, although none could see her blushing face, which was concealed by her vizor. "You are quite right, Monsieur Mariot," she continued; "it was my impulse which led me to *ask* you to let me accompany you to the Duke; you refused, and then impulse summoned the imprudence of which you spoke, and I wilfully followed my way, at the risk even of reputation. I shall re-

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member, for the future, that an impulsive mind makes an imprudent woman."

"Not always." said Mariot, who had been thinking deeply; "I think the argument between right and wrong will often bear a medium. Impulse, when guided by reason, when checked, when pruned of its wild impetuosity by a strong mind and a well-regulated heart, will lead to deeds of virtue and undaunted courage."

"Is it courage to sit at home, and not dare the shafts of the lightning which are playing around the head of the beloved object of our affections?"

"There is courage in resignation! You could not ameliorate the condition of your Royal husband; and your Majesty must know that affliction would be doubly felt by him if it were shared by a being brought up in such luxury and attention."

"And so *he* must suffer alone!" said the Queen, passionately. "Oh, Clementina! had I

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only thy calm frame of mind! had I only thy pious resignation! Are the spirits of the dead suffered to hover around us, Monsieur Mariot?"

"It is a question, I ever think, our finite reason hardly dares answer. The idea that departed spirits look down in compassion on their kindred is very prevalent, but yet I often think that were hardly the consummate bliss of a spirit at peace."

"Nor I," said the Queen. "Supposing—which, alas! I fear me is too likely to come to pass—supposing I am tossed on a sea of affliction, and that sorrow be my lot, oh! then how grieved a kindred soul would be to see me sink in grief, or fall into temptation. Mariot, I can hardly believe now that the spirits of the departed look down upon us."

"I consider the idea very allegorical! When we are inclined to sin, and we recal the sweet voice of a friend who is dead, but who, were the body still on earth, would give us the

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strongest advice to the contrary course—when the recollection of departed virtue restrains us from committing evil, then we figuratively say—'The spirits of the departed are hovering around us.'"

In such conversation as this, the time wore away; and the young Queen scarcely feared to meet the angry glance of her mother, so much had her communion with Clementina's departed worth strengthened her heart. Thus, even after death, a virtuous life is beneficial to the hearts of the living!

"Mother, mother, be not angry with me," cried the young Queen submissively, whilst she related the mournful journey she had had.

And Catherine was *not* angry; she was inwardly pleased and proud to imagine that the same daring spirit which was in her character, existed in the lovely young Queen's heart. *She* did not, like Mariot, tell her to avoid the erring impulse of woman's heart; she did *not* tell her that to depart from the barrier of so-

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ciety, is unfeminine unless very peculiar circumstances oblige a woman so to act. She did not say that her daughter's flight had caused many surmises, and might already have reached the ears of Henri of Navarre; but she left the Royal bride to the rest she so much needed.

Then, for the first time, the conviction that she had no mother to care for her spiritual welfare came across her mind. Her dreams were scarcely less distressing that night than those which hovered round the pillow of the Duke, as, starting up from his hasty slumbers, he threw his arms frantically on the coffin with its wreath of flowers, which was in his room. There, then, was his bride in her castle home, of which he had so often temptingly spoken; there, then, she lay, his wedded bride—wedded, and then clasped in death's arms. Awful lesson of the mutability of Earth's happiness!

All those who had known Clementina, shed a tear over her remains, when, according to the wish of Henri of Guise, she was buried with

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the honour due to a Duchess. Yet Pettura insisted that her own name should be inscribed on the sculptured urn; for, to call her a Duchess, would not better speak her worth. A simple wreath of orange blossoms, entwined with roses, was also there engraven; and there, beneath the cold sod, was buried "youth, beauty, and worth." Those sweetly-tinged flowers, the "*Fleures Immortelles*," were profusely scattered round the turf.

Low, almost lying on the sward, the imposing-looking, and handsome Pettura, uttered a last and fond farewell to the only earthly object of earthly mould he had to regret.

According to her own expressed wish, the Queen of Navarre, clad in sables, her head covered with a thick crape veil, also assisted in at the ceremony. When the coffin was slowly borne into the church; when the many wax-lights reflected dimly on the black drapery around; when the Cardinal de Lorraine, he who had lately wedded a bride, uttered the

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solemn burial service of the dead, oh, then, scalding tears fell down her fair cheeks; and these were the *last* tears Marguerite shed as purely, and for so good a cause.

No more will I speak of her. I have loved to twine around her a wreath of youthful attractions. I have delighted in portraying the *élans* of her young guileless heart. History has, and too justly, blackened her character. Coquettish vanity succeeded to a moderate admiration of her really lovely person; pique succeeded to trust; levity to buoyancy. Alas! she had worse faults. Let History record them; and then, if my readers please, let them own it is time to leave a picture of virtue ere it be spoiled with vice.

A wonderful change took place in the Astrologer's mind. He did not reproach the Médicis for her ungrateful conduct towards him, but he positively refused to see her.

Some years afterwards he entered a strict monastery. His dark luxuriant hair was cut

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close, and the monk's cowl replaced it. He performed every penance—he followed every fast which the Church enjoined. His knees were very frequently bowed in prayer. If ever his thoughts strayed towards human creatures, they hovered not towards the Court of the Médicis, nor towards the home where he had spent long days and sleepless nights, in the vain wish of acquiring a knowledge of a futurity which is wisely cased from the human eye. But he suffered his thoughts to dwell on that dear child of his warmest affections, who slumbered at rest and at peace! How often he fancied he felt her arms entwined round his neck. How often he fancied he heard her voice speaking her own flowing Italian language! A new life, new hopes, new thoughts, swelled Pettura's heart, and he looked back on the wasted hours of his life with deep regret, but with a firm hope of forgiveness. Oh! that men would not require to be so severely chastised before they return to their allegiance and submission towards God!

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Who would have known the once proud man, humbled, self-reproaching—subdued in every feeling? ever bowed in prayer, those knees, which had so long refused to bend—ever parted in praying words, those lips, which had never before so much prayed?

If Clementina appeared to his view, she seemed no more to reproach—she whispered some mystic words of forgiveness; the fancied words sunk calmly and balm-like upon his affrighted ears, until at length the proud man was resigned—resigned to trust, hope, and await God's commands to return to a purer existence.

And that stern man remembered so many sweet recollections, as daily he returned to the same monotonous round of life. To his lofty, though erring mind, the monastic life was indeed a punishment. And what was now the Astrologer's dearest delight? Ay, he sometimes smiled at his own childishness—he took such a keen pleasure in recalling days so long, long riven

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that it was like hailing spectres from another world.

Sometimes he was wandering, in thought, in his own native land; Italia's sweet balmy sky was shining over him; voices so richly toned, saluted his ears; and the mother so long slumbering in death, his own Italian mother, was in the picture; and he was wandering in grounds bathed by the flowing waves of the river; he was straying amidst vineyards; orchards were before him, pines and grapes, rich and lustrous, overhanging his head. And then the scene changed.

The first ambition of his boyish days returned. He delighted then in purer studies; but alas! boyish ambition was succeeded by the ambition of power; he was introduced to the Italian Princess, and the crafty Catherine de Médicis became a dupe to his ambition, whilst he helped to feed the fuel of her own. Then, passions deep and unconfined arose, like whirlwinds in their fury; they scorched the

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soil of the heart, they preyed upon every vital spot of the mind; there they were, like fuel ready to be lighted upon every opportunity, tyrannically burning every better feeling. Now, now, all was changed; but sweet Clementina had been the sacrifice, ere that heart returned to its duty. Pettura felt that the poor maiden's death had recalled him to life.

To life! Yes; as sinners *do* feel they will be forgiven, no matter the difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics—in that we are agreed. It is the good man's belief; it is the sinner's hope; it is the anchor—the pilot to steer the benighted heart.

Oh, blessed forgiveness! like the rainbow, so sweetly reminds us of a lasting promise. There is a time when the repentant sinner *feels* he will be forgiven; there is a time when the sinner's prayers become less confused, and the throbbings of his heart less violent.

After indulging in retrospective views, poor Pettura clasped his hands together; he lifted

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on high his tearful eyes, and he felt he was forgiven.

The King of France still continued on a sick-bed, and some historians say that the most revolting remedies were tried, but without success. If they tell truly, we are informed that Charles was bathed in the blood of infants, who were born dead, in the hope of sustaining his perishing frame. The tidings of peace in the kingdom never wafted by his tossing couch, for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was productive of no good effect. Instead of crushing the Calvinists, the horrible, the appalling Massacre, rendered them stronger, or rather made them furiously angry against their opponents.

Oh! how vain of weak man to raise his hand to annihilate a religion, which the Almighty stamps with his protection! The Duke d'Anjou had now the command of the army, and in 1573 the celebrated siege of Rochelles took place—a siege which will ever be memorable. Women and peasantry, artisans, the peaceful labourers

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of the field, all ranks of men there formed a soldiered band. Then the year 1574 dawned; the winter was succeeded by balmy, joyous Spring. Summer approached; the white blossoms of the trees lay scattered on the ground, and were replaced by the genial clustering fruit, and Charles the Ninth was dying.

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CHAPTER VII.

To die with the consolotary voice of a good conscience whispering peace to the parting soul, is no doubt a blessed exit from this world of wo; and yet a good man feels the pain of dying. To die with sin gnawing at the vitals of the heart; to see phantomed visions of murdered victims; to hear the shrieks of the dying, to live mentally in a range of impassioned remorse—oh! terrible passage of the soul to the threshold of eternal life! No angelic forms hover round the couch of sin; no angels sing

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their gentle numbers; they dare not say, "Sister spirit, come away."

Oh! for the agony of the mother of that Royal youth, who, at twenty-four years of age, in the first green blush of manhood, was dying—dying in bodily and mental anguish. Could any one, to have seen the haughty Médicis' hands clasped in anguish—could any one, after gazing at her pallid brow, have believed that she would ever again be the all-political, all-dark, Regent-Queen? Yes, she shook off a grief, which was so natural to a woman; that woman a mother. She wiped away the cold drops which gathered on the Royal youth's brow; she pillowed higher the sinking head, and then she spoke in the dying ears—Oh! horrible—not a mission of heavenly purport, not words fit to marshal a soul to its new and glorious abode. Her words were deep and solemn, but they were all earthly, all selfish. "Charles, if you have ever loved me," she said, "Leave not the earth without making a

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more binding arrangement; it is for the public weal I desire the Regency."

"Mother, mother, that will be when I am dead."

"My son, we must all die once."

"But oh! my soul is so troubled, so disquieted; I am so unhappy, so unfit to die! Can you give me no comfort?"

"We will talk of that anon; sign the Regency Bill first."

"Are you sure the people will like it? What pain I am suffering! pillow me up higher; moisten my parched lips. Now call Lorraine; call Mariot."

"You had better sign first."

"No, no, no," cried Charles, "let me pray. But I am a sinner! Mother, heard you that dreadful shriek?"

"No, my son, all is still, all is quiet; you hear the soft summer wind, wafting the lilac and laburnums close to your chamber window. All, all is still."

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"It is *not*," said Charles. "Hark! dost call that the wafting of a tree? It was Coligny's dying shriek—it was, it was—"

"My son, it is my voice you hear; none is near to harm you."

"None near!" said Charles, with a bitter laugh; "there are spirits; dark, ugly spirits, all around me. Coligny is first in the throng. Oh, why was I not more wise, mother? Why was I so sinful?"

"Peace, my son; peace to your sorrowful heart. You have naught to reproach yourself with; I alone am to blame."

"I might have silently allowed the massacre, but I had the weakness to fire—to slay with my own hands—and now—now, I am dying. No scalding tears can erase the dark spot from my soul; no repentance can aught avail; for repentance may sing a bitter requiem, yet it cannot recall those injured martyrs to life. Pray, mother, pray; though it be too late, yet prayer is the food of the dying soul. My eye

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cannot rest on you; it is dim, and an impenetrable film is crossing the line of light; the sun seems veiled in darkness, and darker is my soul. Mother, mother, pray—"

* * * * *

"Time is waning, Charles; the light of life is extinguishing. Would you leave your kingdom all distraught? Others were *my* sins; this would be *yours*. Sign the Regency Bill; give me the charge of the kingdom; your soul will be easier."

"Will it?" cried the poor weak youth; "give me the paper—guide my hand—I cannot see. Now it is done, *will* you not pray? No, no, you shall not pray. Call Lorraine—haste—call him!"

* * * * *

Long and deep were Lorraine's prayers; convulsive were Mariot's sobs: they caught the attention of the dying King.

"Come here, my faithful Mariot; let me pillow my head on your breast; and let my heart

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cease to beat whilst it is on your own so quickly throbbing. Press on my pallid brow the last kiss of affection. Oh! that I had listened to thee!"

"Hope, trust; rely on a merciful Providence."

"Alas! alas!" said Charles.

"Alas, for all the sins of mankind," said Mariot; "but, thanks to the forgiving One above, who has pardoned sinners as deeply stained as thou."

"Blessed words," murmured the dying King; "and bless thee, faithful Mariot, for uttering them. Farewell now, my life is waning. Mother—Mariot—a long, a last farewell!

The head sunk heavily on Mariot's breast; and for a moment the latter thought the Royal youth had expired; but once again he spoke.

"Lorraine, when I am no more, cause masses to be said for the rest of my soul Oh, Mariot, I am in torture!"

"Where is the seat of your pain?"

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"Where? In the brain—in the soul—on every waning vital spark. No sinner ever felt worse remorse. I—"

No more words could the Royal youth utter. A few hard and agonizing struggles, and Charles the Ninth's soul had gone to the last rest of the departed.

* * * * *

Hark! hark! There arose a wild, an awful-sounding scream—the cry of a mother, who now for the first time believed that there was no more hope. That cry, proceeding from the Médicis' lips, was shrill—it was the wail of an erring and hopeless spirit: it was such a cry as we should utter over the dead, if we had not the blest assurance that "there is life beyond the grave."

Yes, whatever has been said of Catherine de Médicis, there was a deep root of maternal pride in her heart, which necessarily filled it with at least a shadow of that purest of all feelings—maternal love. It has been extolled by

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poets, that feeling, surpassing all other in its exquisitely beautiful refinement. But poets are too rapturous in their ecstasies—they dazzle more than they convince. Maternal love, as a general, lofty feeling, is less beautiful than when it is individualized. The roaring lion tames his nature, and loves his little ones. The actual feeling of loving a child *is no virtue whatever*—it is an inherent impulse implanted in the human breast. But when a mother enters into all the imaginations of her child, until confidence, love—pure, unutterable love—unites them—when the love *is* passing general extol, it is *then* it is beautiful. This feeling had never entered Catherine de Médicis' ideas. She had much maternal pride, but no sweet, dear, maternal love; her children knew how ambitious, how imperious, how searching she was—they obeyed her as every one seemed to obey her—not from love, but from the sway of a voice, manner, and will, seeming formed to command. But death is so

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different to any other stroke. No sooner was Charles's poor suffering frame cold and still, than the Queen merged into the woman—she buried her face in the rich velvet coverlet, and she wept.

Yet scarcely were those tears the same as other mourners shed; she repined rather than regretted. She felt astonished that children should be taken before their parent; she felt dissatisfied with the just dispensations of Providence; but that unruly heart never asked —"Where, oh, where, had the bright soul flown?"

The question would have been salutary.

Catherine would have next inquired—

"Whither her own soul would have gone?"

But more Queenly, and more majestically, proudly-beautiful, the Médicis arose from her meditation—or rather with her self-argument, for it all ended in this cold sophistry.—

That since all men must die, *she* should en-

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joy, whilst she might, the passing hours of life!"

* * * * *

The day—that most solemn day—arrived, when the corpse is placed in the coffin; and although the mother withdrew to a distant part of the Palace, still the melancholy sound of preparation was heard. A mother's ear alone could have detected it. Yes, yes! the mother thought her once blithesome son was being lifted up and placed in his coffin. She remembered the once untameable spirits, and all his youthful glee; but after one effort—an effort, alas! but too successful—a glow once more visited her cheeks. Strange-hearted woman!

* * * * *

And upon the air, hark! hark! there is a sound! meaning—sad—lonely! Hark! the dismal peal! it is for Charles the Ninth's burial. Poor, unhappy, monarch! Mariot had once had bright expectations, but when he saw his hopeful pupil firing at the Huguenots, what

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must have been his feelings? Now, remorse and sorrow were too late: the grave had closed over his faults. No more could the disconsolate tutor hope, and the vision he formed of the future seemed only to augment his tears.

Deeply, solemnly, tolled the deep-toned bell: the sound is echoed afar on the balmy air; the fragrant lilac bends in the luxuriance of its beauty; the upsoaring lark utters her notes of love; the gay children of earth spread their heads to the breeze; all is tranquil, save the troubled hearts of men, whilst Charles the Ninth's corpse is borne by the sable-clad retainers, and the nodding black plumes tower high.

* * * * *

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Deeply, solemnly, still tolled the deep-toned bell. Did it tell that a soul was at peace? Did it seem to say, high up in the haven of Eternal happiness Charles the Ninth's soul is

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wafted? Away with the sad inquiry! He *was* a sinner, but we know that He who reads the heart has sometimes forgiven sinners crimson-stained.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Deeply, solemnly, tolled the deep-toned bell. Did its mournful pathos speak salutary words to the ambitious heart of Catherine de Médicis? She sits in the embrasure of a window overlooking the lovely gardens of the Louvre; she is clad in the deep trappings of sorrow; her face, pale and tearful, is hidden in her hands. She hears that bell, and she feels that Death has been near, quite near. Yet a few days more and she is *too* calm, *too* much the same as usual. She is no more the weeping mother; she is again "Catherine de Médicis."

Henri the Third, successor to his brother, is still in Poland, and the Queen is once more Regent. Her hatred to Henri of Navarre is declared; she meets him no more with well-

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feigned pleasure; she has no more need to dissemble, for, aided by the assistance of the British Queen, the King is advancing towards Rouen.

There are few persons who have a moderate share of information, who will not discover, that whatever grave faults they may find in my fiction, they will at the same time see, that I have endeavoured to rein in with veracity historical facts.

At this period, then, it is well to leave off talking of France, as it is *not* my wish to enter into the subject of the Wars of the League. The lovers of the reign of Henri Quatre must also be acquainted with that of the less significant Henri III., his predecessor. And now for a few reflections on Catherine de Médicis.

Let us view this very beautiful woman in every possible light; the shades of vice predominate, and the youngest novelist who has had the boldness to give her opinions of her charac-

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ter, *dares* not palliate one part of her principles, lest she herself should be accused of loving vice. She was a woman, but she had a masculine understanding; and the softness she could sometimes assume made her only the more dangerously attractive. She was not Queen by right, but the Regent of the kingdom, and the Royal mother of a youth, who, in better hands, might have lived in glory and died in peace. She was doubly culpable, because she was doubly responsible. Charles the Ninth was a great encourager of arts and sciences; and although his excessive love of the chase necessarily hardened him, and prevented his giving much time to literature, yet History records that he sometimes bent his mind to the *harmony* of poetry. Poetry, methinks, speaks so softly to the human heart; it can so lull the passions; but the Médicis' voice was louder than the plaintive Muse.

Mariot, the learned translator of Plutarch, was not suffered to slumber in oblivion; the

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King had him created First Almoner of the kingdom, and never forgot his services as his much-patient preceptor. Perhaps the truest tears of regret shed over his memory fell from Mariot's eyes; for the reflective mentor of his deceased pupil, must then have recalled that Charles had the seeds of knowledge engrafted in his heart, which might have been productive of the sunniest fruit.

Charles the Ninth's early death, his keen sufferings in his last agony, his short, but eventful reign, are indeed reflective truths of the baneful influence of listening to bad advice. That mother's voice, who spurred him on to level his gun at the flying Huguenots, had planted a poisoned dagger in her son's heart.

Perhaps in early life she had held that son on her knee; he had looked up to her in the trusting confidence of infantine love, little thinking that she would close the dying eyes of a despairing sinner.

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Blessed and good are the counsels of those who have the moral courage to tell us of our faults. Wise are we when we follow their advice. The type of a true, a disinterested friend, is what? "*Sincerity.*"

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CHAPTER VIII.

When the King had breathed his last sigh—when his erring soul was wafted to that bourne, to meet punishment or forgiveness, but alas! to find repentance too late—then arose a doleful cry—such as a faithful mastiff utters over the grave of the master he has so truly loved. It was Joseph—the poor fool Joseph—lamenting his master's death.

There he had remained in an adjoining anteroom to that in which the dying King lay; there he had heard each low moan; and when the last—the very last—was uttered, he turned

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himself towards the very Regal chamber, [illegible] my [illegible] good he dared to penetrate even before the pres[illegible] of Regal grief.

And Catherine, the mother, was then [illegible]d the her knees; she had placed her head o[illegible] coverlet, she saw not the Jester—and h[illegible]e faith faithful creature, he advanced to the [illegible]rd thee the bed, and he gazed long and sorr[illegible]o explain upon that once joyous King's much altere[illegible]e must Unable to contain his burst of sorrow [illegible]Priest, roamed disconsolate down stairs; and ther[illegible] jester met one of the priests, who had come to as[illegible] as in administering comfort to the King.

"You are too late," cried poor Joseph, [illegible]f shaking his head mournfully, whilst a chorus of bells chimed, as he did so; the Jester doffed his ornamented hat.

"Curse those bells," he cried; "I will never wear them more. I am lost now I have lost my master. Royal Charles, thou art no better now than thy poor Jester will be in death; and it may be, I shall fare better than thou wilt."

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Peace to the King's memory," said the
st, twirling his beads. "It is the will of
"

es, but it was the will of men—of priests
rafty astrologers, that the poor young
ent his soul afar from the righteous; he
wicked by nature. I remember the
en he was otherwise than——"

rest thou, Jester, talk thus to a holy
? Darest thou mean to insinuate, St.
olomew's day was not a glorious one?
t thou not a heretic, sinner?"

"I am a sinner and a heretic, if so it pleaseth thee to call me, Priest; yet, but an hour ago, I was Joseph the jester—the fool—the buffoon. And thou, Priest, what art thou? what art thou more than a Jester? what council wilt thou give the Queen-Mother? Is it the poison or sword by which thou wilt say—'get rid of Joseph!' Ha! ha! ha!"

"The fellow is mad!"

"Mad!" cried Joseph; "wise men go mad.

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fools never. Is it mad to weep for Charles, my master? Why, Mariot wept; Mariot the good —Mariot the learned; Is *he* a fool?"

"And by my faith, indeed not," said the Priest.

"Faith! *thy* faith—thou hast no more faith than a brute being; nay, Priest, I heard thee when Catherine de Médicis told thee to explain to the King that before all things, he must settle the Regency upon her. Catiff Priest, was that thine office? *Pardi!* Joseph the jester would have made as good a priest!"

"And Joseph the jester will hang as well as any other man," said the Priest, laying hold of his collar; but Joseph shook him off as if he were a mere babe.

"Thy fastings have made thee over light, Sieur Priest; get thee gone, and touch me not again."

"Son! reprobate son! I will pass my anathema upon thee."

"And so will I!" cried Joseph; "I, Jo-

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seph the jester, Joseph the fool; I excommunicate thee — thou false, caitiff Priest. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Enter, never, the pale of the Church," cried the Priest.

"*Grand merci!* I shall not be obliged to hear thy croaking voice," said the still more angry Jester.

Faithful fool! he could only show his anger by choler, and he lacked none of that. How the controversy would have ended is a matter of doubt, but at that moment, General Tavannes crossed the court-yard. It was a fortunate *contre temps*. The Priest withdrew, sulkily, casting a furious glance at Joseph from beneath his thick lashes, whilst Joseph, for an answer, snapped his fingers in derision.

"Joseph, my merry man, what art thou about?" cried General Tavannes; "remember —the *ràgout à la Mèdicis!*"

"Go to the devil with your folly," said the Jester; "I am a wise man now!"

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"I have seen no signs of thy wisdom yet," said Tavannes.

"And tell me one man at Court who displays any, save in his own opinion, Monsieur le Géneral?"

"Come, come, Joseph, cease thy prattling; the King is dead; but we all knew he was dying. Come along with me; I will be a good master unto thee."

"Master, indeed," cried Joseph, drawing himself up with all the dignity he could command. "Master, forsooth! I, who have never been apart from Royalty. Get a crown, General, and then be my master; for, hang me, if I am not as proud as if Catherine de Médicis had inoculated me."

"Come, come with me," still persisted the General, soothingly.

"No more," cried Joseph; "I will never come to Court again."

The poor Jester cast one most sad glance at a window on high; he howled piteously

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and then he ran away with the swiftness of lightning.

And that poor creature knew where to find sympathy; he knew of one sweet spot away from the Court of sin and folly. He turned to the poverty-stricken mother who had given him birth; and he railed not at *her* as he had at others.

"Here is gold—gold—gold, mother; enough for thee, enough for poor Joseph. I will never go to Court again. I will die here. I cannot serve two masters."

And that mother—old, barely clad—she seemed more beautiful to the simple Jester's eyes than the fair ladies of the Court he had just quitted.

Holy, maternal love! holy bond of nature! it is the poor and ignorant who feel so truly that balm of all sympathy, a mother's pathos of consolation.

She let the Jester continue his raillery against crowned and mitred heads; she knew

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it was no use stopping the torrent of his invectives, but by the time the shades of evening had descended upon the earth, the turbulent heart was calmed in the refreshment of sleep.

Ay, and long after Charles the Ninth's death was forgotten; when even the horrors of 1572, when Paris, Orleans, Lyons, Thoulouse, and all the most persecuted provinces were calm, still that faithful heart thought upon his once gay young master.

But twenty-three years of age he was; who will not sigh at the thought of a death so untimely! And sad is the power of example; there arose another, guided as Charles had been, by a woman whose every thought was tinged with vice.

Fickle and pleasure loving, Henri the Third was more truly cruel than his unfortunate brother. The Poles, from whom he fled on his brother's decease, never gave one sigh for the loss of such a King, and he ascended

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the French throne with projects of tyranny ripe for execution.

The Jester kept his word—he never returned to the French Court; he loathed the thoughts of grandeur. Poor fool! he had thought his cap and bells as grand as a chancellor thinks his wig; and it was sorrowful, yet ludicrous, to hear Joseph soliloquize, hat in hand, talking to it as if it were a relic, such as pilgrims preserve.

I won each bright bell, one by one, as I deserved it," he would exclaim: "this I had for outwitting a Duke—that for thrashing an Abbot —that for finding my master's books, and prompting him with a duplicate behind a door. Ah, poor bells, poor bells! how bright they look! laurels these are which never die—laurels which I will leave behind me."

And truly the Jester did not live long. One chilly November morning he kissed his mother with more than wonted affection.

"I go a roaming, mother," he cried; "hast thou a message?"

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"No, Joseph, and it is a cold day; see how bright is our little fire, and you look pale and ill; stop here, Joseph."

But for all answer, Joseph whistled to his faithful dog, and Dodo looked up wistfully in his poor master's face. "Come along, Dodo, come along with me; what care we for cold weather? come along."

He felt the rigorous cold—he felt benumbed—he felt ill—ay more, he felt he was dying—he felt his poor heart, once bruised, now broken, and he knew where he fain would expire. He wished to weep once more on his Royal master's grave—there he wished to die. One more look he turned upon the house where that lonely mother would henceforth dwell; one solitary tear fell upon his sunken cheeks, and then he proceeded on his way.

What a thing is habit! dull, ill, dying, still the Jester continued joking; yet each joke was accompanied with a doleful finale.

What a merry, jolly fool, I was once upon

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a time! now—now—well—well it was summer once—now, how cold and chilly it is. My name is Joseph Winter, so it is. Come along, Dodo, you are more slow than I am; dance along, my jolly fellow; nay, nay, not so fast; thou must dance to the tune of a minuet—slow and graceful, and gentle. I've seen Catherine de Médicis and pretty Queen Marguerite dance a minuet; they never danced better than Joseph and Dodo"

But at length, after halting and panting, the grave of Charles the Ninth appeared in view. There, beside it, knelt the poor Jester; and gradually his aching head sunk low upon the cold turf. And Dodo, too, drew near; poor faithful Dodo—faithful to his master, as Joseph to his King. He licked those cold, clammy, death-stricken eyes; he howled piteously, and then he crouched down by the dying Jester's side. The damp of death was now upon his brow; the vital spark beat slower and slower; the snow descended in large flakes, and ever

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and anon poor Joseph, feebly brushed away the falling drops, as they fell pitiless upon his face; and his last act was kindness, for he took Dodo and smiled a languid smile, full of the pain of dying, as he sheltered the animal under his own clothes, to keep him from the cold tempest. A few moments more, and Joseph existed no more; whilst the weight of the cold corpse, falling heavily on Dodo, the dog died with his master—poor faithful brute!

Even Catherine was struck by so much fidelity, and Joseph was buried with much solemnity; over his tomb two figures are erected—Joseph and his dog, extended on a grave. The solitary mother had long expected this catastrophe, and Tavannes, who had really loved the once merry Jester, provided for her, who never ceased to lament the half-witted creature, who had, amidst his bursts of folly, entertained better thoughts, than many of those refined beings deemed—courtiers.

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Courtiers! yes — they had shared all the blithe hours of Charles's wildest merriment; but none, save the Jester, wept true tears over his grave!

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CHAPTER IX.

It was at the close of a stormy day, that Pettura was one evening disturbed from his devotions by the entrance of a brother friar.

"Brother Pettura, there is one below wisheth to see thee," he said.

And Pettura, who began to look back upon life as upon a troubled dream, had scarcely collected himself, ere, descending to a small room below stairs, to his astonishment the Duc de Guise stood before him. Pettura turned deadly pale, and retreated back a few steps.

"What would'st thou with me?" he said.

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"Art thou here to recall a dream, pregnant with thoughts deeply, everlastingly rife? Art thou here to bode some future evil? Ah, Henri of Guise, a father's grief never slumbers."

"Pettura," said Henri of Guise, turning upon the bereaved parent a look full of young melancholy; "Pettura, lay aside thy feeling grief for a few moments, and listen to me. I am no longer to be duped by the smiles of Catherine de Médicis; her beauty is waning, and with it her power of disguising. Some presentiment tells me I shall be assassinated. I have met with traps at almost every step I have trodden. Henri the Third is a pleasure-loving monarch, possessing not even his late brother's freaks of generosity. Pettura, you will be revenged, and I come to tell you."

"Tell me no more of a Court, vile, miserable, degraded! And as to revenge, ah! I think of it no longer. Why come to remind me I ever lived in its contemplation? Oh! Henri of Guise, shun those vicious haunts, where

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wickedness, like lions let loose, run insatiate, roaring for a new prey. Shun that majestic woman, who, when her beauty wanes, must still be powerful, clad in wit and deception. I know the poison lurking beneath each golden arrow. Go, young man! I have nothing save words of regret and remorse to say. Go!—go! leave me!"

"Not yet! not yet, Pettura! there is still one thing I would perform here; take this key!" he cried, detaching a small chain from his neck; "take it, and keep it, for the rust upon it is grafted there by my falling tears. It is the key of the chapel, where Clementina's remains are laid! If I die a foul death—assassinated—thrown aside ignominiously—perchance my pale corse may not be buried; but if possible, cause me to be buried near her, the young, the beautiful, the *bride*!"

No more he said, but paced up and down the narrow room, and then, with one last gaze at Pettura, he rushed from the apartment.

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Even from his tranquil dwelling-place, the Astrologer heard hereafter of Henri of Guise's fate.

When he tottered, old and bent, and leaned upon a stick—when he took a calm walk in the enclosure of the convent, the young and hapless Duke had slumbered his last sleep—assassinated as he had predicted, and actually murdered by orders of the King.

He died in the flower of his age; yet none wept a tear o'er his grave, for in those troublous days, a selfish feeling pervaded all breasts; each one mistrusted the other.

Readers, let me add a few historical remarks; these many deaths are not imaginary, indeed; if we would sum up many facts to bring forward, with strength, a forcible lesson, let us think of the awful retribution depicted in History's pages.

After all her toil, after scaring her heart, after staining the soul—once formed brightly to type a purer nature—did the grasping,

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longing, searching Catherine de Médicis, reap any positive benefit? Could even her callous heart rejoice to witness the sad havoc, both of war and the fatal spirit of revenge, marking that period?

Now do we look back with grave astonishment upon those days of hasty revenge; and we wonder, as we peruse a work of romance, "how far all this may be true." A few words may, therefore, be welcomed by the thoughtful reader.

Poltrot de Méré, a young man of English extraction, *did* murder the old Duke of Guise; and the young Duke Henri, his son, was sacrificed in the reign of Henri the Third, to that King's political revenge. And not only were the Protestants, or Huguenots, persecuted by Charles the Ninth, under the influence of the Queen-Mother, but they met with the same fate under the dynasty of Charles's predecessor, Francis the Second.

Catherine de Médicis, in her husband's life-

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time, and in that of three of her sons, was the actual instigator of all these evils. She died a short time before Henri the Third, in the seventh-first year of her reign.

Oh! then, like a calm after a tempest; like sun-beams dispersing a misty sky; like hope on the heart, when sorrow has long there reigned, there came another one to the French throne—one who had caught a spark from Queen Elizabeth of England's lofty mind; one who threw a halo around the slumbering genius of France. *The great Henri Quatre.*

Memorable edict of Nantes! when the persecuted Protestants returned, hoping, joyful; exalted by misfortune, improved by persecution.

Hail, joyful throng of quiet Christians! unobtrusive followers of the Prince of Peace. Hail, monarch! hail, *all* monarchs, who bring back peace to a long-disturbed country!

It is why Elizabeth of England has so im-

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mortal a name. Faults she had—some very great ones; but when prisons were broken open, chains were snapped and severed, the brand was thrown aside, the persecution ceased, oh! then the woman's faults were lost in the magnitude of the chaotic power of genius; and cold are the hearts which echo not—"Great Queen Bess!" Strange to say, Henri Quatre, her contemporary, was such another; he was oftentimes wavering; he was weak. Lofty in genius, he knew not how to govern his own heart; his mind could cope with the greatest; his heart was a wanton thing, in the power of many women.

It is not here my intention to talk of the King husband's conduct to the lovely Marguerite of Valois. As I have before dismissed her from my realms of fiction, I dare not speak of her any longer; whilst those latent observations, lingering thoughtfully, retrospectively, on the pages of a novel, may be dismissed by some, and slighted by others.

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Yet there are some, aye, and many, who will love the author's pen when steeped in the thoughts of her heart; who will patiently and gently ponder over them; and, perhaps, think they see the mind more, than when fiction's thraldom glosses over the individual writer. A word, then, to these! Is there profit or pleasure in revenge?

Nay; by every written fact, by every recorded word, I answer nay; by the sorrow of sinners' death-beds, by their unhappy lives and unhallowed deaths—I answer nay.

Politicians, the horrors of the sixteenth century in France under the Médicis' dynasty—in England, under bloody Queen Mary's sway—may never, never be repeated; but may not the sad and petty pique of political feeling be carried to a great length? may not some who have enjoyed together early scholastic days of pure, boyish friendship, hold against each other's throats the dagger of jealousy, the poisoned cup of retaliation? Oh, by the

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memory of those early days, when political thoughts were afar; by the memory of all the gentle ideas ye love, Politicians, pause ere party-feeling would estrange your hearts; and pause, ere ye condemn one another's judgment; ere men, whose hearts swell with all that is noble, all that is kind, are levelled against with weapons of opposition, piercing sometimes from the public press, unto the domestic haunts of their love.

Remember, Politicians, that toleration is the groundwork equally of domestic and political virtues. Still not the cry—hear, hear—it is often the voice, like a still, small sound, recalling you to a sane step.

For aye, it is temporary insanity to tear each other, manly English hearts, solely because ye differ. Ye have England's weal at heart—ye are the loyal servants of a virtuous Queen. Oh, then, that spirit of toleration but raises ye higher—higher—far higher than woman's pen can descry.

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Forgive the young author; or if ye would give her a *quid pro quo* for her heartfelt, though "tremblingly brave" oration, tell her she has not offended, and allow your attention to be rivetted.

Happy England! happy politicians! ye upon whose names youthful eyes are turned; ye to whom *young* English politicians look up—*old* England, never be extant; it is thy model to whom all should direct their gaze. Invidious pen! dare not to trace a name—speak but in hints of the father of England's liberty, he is so tolerant, he is so truly noble. It is the blood of intrinsic goodness flows in his veins; he is as the father of the child he loves; the father of England's welfare.

And seek not, young author—dare not trace the name of that genius of oratory—that lion of emphasis, that open hearted Politician! No cry can still his ardour, and death alone will silence that voice rushing, falling, rising, like swelling torrents dashing down, but not to over-

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whelm. To relieve the heat of the heart, sometimes to be quelled, and *be* convinced, oftener *to convince*, but always harmoniously cadenced to one tune—who—who art thou?

"And who art thou, young Member? risen like a bright star; twinkling yet modestly aspiring, but not vain; lofty, but not obtrusive. And who knows not another one, though no name be traced—the Politician who stoops to grace his leisure hours by embodying those ideas, those thoughts taught by so grand a hand, to fall gently upon Woman's ears? Yes, Woman's eyes can thus gaze, without flinching, upon the word Politic; and even if she understand not all, she *knows*, she *feels* its practical theory —*fame* all centred in one word—*good*; whilst spangled with love-frighted imaginings—romance, blended with wholesome truths—Woman reads—and reads to be convinced.

No more from my quiet home: who cares what thoughts rest in my heart? And when laying my head to rest, at the hour others dress

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for a ball, who cares that imaginative creation is the companion of my pillow? And still doth the roar of the vast world reach me—not to overwhelm, not to dazzle. Leisurely do I pluck the faded leaves from my bouquet; and I fain would rear for the public a wreath—immortal, undying.

Catherine de Médicis, thy faults were as spurs guiding the author's course to a deeper loathing for thy erring career; virtues, alas! there were none to depict. In searching for them, each grain was too deeply concealed, if any there were, in that unwieldy soil. Unhappy woman; even the ruthless hand of Death brought no salutary lesson to thy heart—none, none; and her sons died, and her friends and foes dropped around her. She heeded not the warning voice, and yet she lived long enough to feel all the burden of her sins.

Oh, what a pity that genius should have been so wantonly thrown away; for, doubtless, genius there was amidst all that cruel sway.

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What a pity it was that Catherine felt not the real tenure

"Of all that forms our true pre-eminence."

But nay! on, on she went, until of her might be exclaimed—

"Morn, noon, and night, in one eternal play,
Are thine ambition!"

But we may *not* add—

"Till thou wear'st away;"

for when did Catherine de Médicis' ambition wear away? How true it was of that ambition—

"'Tis thine to suffer through uncounted day."

Yet it was not on this subject the Poet wrote —for, if I quote rightly, it is added—

"Yet, welcome, all."

Welcome, means the Poet (Montgomery), all

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proper exertions towards the welfare of the land of our kindred, but ambition, cemented by cruelty, fostered by revenge, fed by horrid vice—that ambition has no welcome; though it may never die, its only requiem is remorse.

Yet, fellow-mortals, fellow-readers of this our world, who can answer this, save in the spirit I answer it? who dare affirm with certainty what sins can be forgiven? Think of the superstitious times in which she lived; think of the encouragement even clergy gave to every vice of that spoilt heart; bring the sixteenth century before your gaze, and say—Is Catherine de Médicis, fallen from that balmy, holy path of forgiveness! Let not Disdain curl her proud lips; let not Cruelty cast the first stone; let not Ignorance bind each fetter; let not Blindness shut out the vale of mercy. And now, robbing once more, the Poet's leaves—

"If ever thought of mine,
Hath woo'd a spirit into calm divine,"

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let me woo it now, when I would cause those feelings to be wrapt in a halo of brightness; so that having some lustre to spare, other minds may, without blushing for the plagiarism, catch up the lustre, and exclaim, "We will not judge hastily."

Slumber, then, Catherine de Médicis! Thy fatal beauty and thy vices slumber in Oblivion's tomb;—at least, never more shall *my* pen hover oe'r thy name, albeit a choir of voices would not be too many to my ears when conning over the pages written in my first novel. If aught of floweried sweetness should blossom o'er that oblivious tomb, be they watered by the tears of regret kind hearts shed over the sinner's grave.

They are hallowed, those tears, and they purify the sternest soil. *Hope* blooms in renovated freshness as the drops flow upon it; and *forgiveness,* cherub-like, stretches its mild wings forth even over the Médicis' tomb.

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CHAPTER X.

And Mariot, the faithful preceptor—he whom even Catherine de Médicis respected—even amidst his favourite orations he felt no more a ray of delight. There was something of occasional frankness in the unfortunate King's disposition. There had been seeds of good all crushed, yet it never had been poor Mariot's fault. How often he had railed against that vile policy which makes men forget what a purer mind bears ever in view; how he railed at that still viler spirit of revenge, which, demoniac-like, rushed impetuous, unreined, over

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the land of France. Nurtured in the land where balmy air, orange groves, vineyards, sunlit mountains, are extolled, Catherine de Médicis—a *woman*—had bruised and broken most countless hearts; and for many reasons Mariot did all in his power to keep away from that haughty Queen-Mother. He never felt "the ruin of her smile," for no smile could allure him; but he felt the true rectitude of his own heart would make him too boldly speak the truth—truth too bold in itself for Catherine de Médicis to hear. But one evening Lorraine broke upon Mariot's solitude; and the latter, who ever mistrusted the Cardinal, wondered what new plot was brooding.

A frown passed over his face, but he bowed, and pointed in silence to a chair.

"You are dumb," said Lorraine, haughtily; "but I forgot you loved Charles."

"You forget, then, my Lord Cardinal, that which I can never cease to remember," was the laconic reply.

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"France will soon forget there was even a Charles the Ninth," said the Cardinal.

"Nay, nay," said Mariot, with considerable bitterness, "say not Charles the Ninth will ever be forgotten. Not so long as men can remember, will St. Bartholomew's dreadful deeds be effaced either from the pages of History or the pages of men's hearts. And thou, my well-beloved, though erring pupil, thou hast done all this. Not *all*, not all—thine were the deeds; to another's conscience the advice must be placed. My Lord Cardinal, I pray you speak no more to me of the Past. When I am shrined at rest, where oblivion's tomb casts its shadows over men, then only shall I be at peace."

"Gracious! Mariot, there be many would deem themselves fortunate in thy stead. The King's bounty—"

"Talk not to me of gold," cried Mariot, gradually warming; "talk not to me of the base metal, the price so often of all virtue.

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Talk not of gain, I think only of loss—of the loss which no gold can buy—the loss irreparable of my young Royal master. Sin cannot be retrieved with gold, and he, hapless youth—he——"

* * * * * *

"Mariot, art thou unbelieving? do I not cause masses to be prayed for the deceased King's soul? and hundreds of tapers are burning even now on the consecrated altar—"

"Churchman, hear me!" said Mariot. "Send me to the confessional—send me to the torture—send me to the Pope—send me to Catherine de Médicis—do as thou wilt afterward! now thou shalt hear my words!

"I believed once in every rite of our Popish Church. If I sinned, I confessed; if I were absolved, I deemed myself forgiven; but mine eyes are opened! Thou, Cardinal—thou, great Lorraine! thou didst absolve Catherine de Médecis, when sin black as hell lay at her heart! thou didst hear her foul intentions; thou didst

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give her thy absolution—and I believe no more in that rite!"

The Cardinal's face grew deadly pale with the rage he could not conceal. He stamped his feet, he threw back the cowl from his head, and he peered into Mariot's face, as if to ascertain if he were in his right senses.

And Mariot, conscious in his own rectitude, returned look for look, scorn for scorn; his loud voice rolled at length like angry thunder, and Lorraine quivered as he continued:—

"Yes, Churchman, not only wilt thou answer for thy deeds, but thou hast made thyself answerable for those of Catherine de Médicis. I would not have thy conscience, to be Cardinal Lorraine this very night. Cankered must be thy heart—and thy religion! God of Heaven! is *that* religion? Was it religion to persecute hoary-headed men, to learn the secrets of Court-born maidens' hearts, and *tell* them again to Catherine de Médicis? Was this thy sacred avocation as Confessor? And

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to what image, save the mammon of thy coveteous heart, hast thou ever bowed thy knees? Go, Cardinal; it is by men's lives, not the abstract theory, we judge of their religion; and thou, with thy mitred head, thou hast a heathen's heart. A heathen! God forgive me —thou art not as good. The poor fire-worshippers, gazing with reverence at the luminary of their adoration, look up at least with a feeling of awe. The Mahometan longs to dwell in the paradise of his creation, with the bright houries around him; he believes that if he be vicious his hopes will never be realized; but thou, Cardinal, thou hast made a mockery of religion, and I scorn to follow the same rituals thou hast disgraced!"

"Man, be thou man, or be there some devil in you—fear my revenge, and expect it too," continued Lorraine, in a voice choked with passion. "Live to-day, and live tomorrow. Yet, know not how soon thy end is at hand."

"I care not," said Mariot. "I expected

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this; I have so lived as not to dread death; I have not murdered—ruined—betrayed; I have not held a sacred office, to work out worldly ends; I have not glanced at crowned heads, and said, "Ye are mine, as much as if they *were* mine." I have not accumulated riches, by robbing others; I am plain Mariot, the simple, unpretending man—the man of sorrow, pining over the sins of others; and in thy secret heart, thou art envying now even the victim thou hast written in thy tablets."

"Mariot," said Loraine, "it was not to be insulted I came here; the Queen-Mother requires thy presence."

"I require not hers," said Mariot, "and, so help me, God, I will not willingly seek *her* presence. Go to that degraded woman, and tell her other tales than those thou art wont to con in her deluded ears; go tell her there is an hereafter, a terrible Tribunal, a God Merciful, a God Avenger! Go, tell her, that if poison and steel tell no tales here, they record words

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on high; sent there by the very demons who arranged and plotted, and then betrayed! go, tell her all this, and then——"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Loraine, pretending to scoff at Mariot. "And thy learned head, my virtuous, my saintish Mariot—at how many francs dost thou value it, that thou would'st have me bear a message, which, by its purport, would bring the answer delivered by the executioner?"

"No executioner has power to change my sentiment; but, I read thy thoughts, Cardinal: thou knowest I speak but the truth; thou wilt not repeat a word I have said; thou fearest my death more than I do."

"And why so, Mariot?"

"Why, because even now, disease is written on thy brow, and thou art thinking of thinning, not burdening thy conscience with more vice. Go on thy ways, my Lord Cardinal; like the poor fool Joseph, I am weary of Courts; I will

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cross thy path no more, and I shall soon be out of thy recollection."

Mariot turned away, and the Cardinal sullenly left the room.

"I will go no more to the Médicis," cried Mariot, aloud; and he kept his word. When next a message came for him, he had retired to a quiet house in a distant province. Poor Mariot! and for this had he toiled at night, to inculcate precepts by day. A rude, remorseless hand—albeit it had been a mother's—had snapped the young twig, in its early growth, and thus bent, and twisted, it had continued to grow. A mightier architect than poor Mariot was found in the architect raising up the temple of vice; and the pernicious poison of a Médicis' advice had destroyed, with unrelenting grasp, a young, wavering heart. The last funeral knell sounding for Charles the Ninth's death had struck a doleful chord in that faithful Tutor's heart

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The clever translator of Plutarch was fast growing morose, when, after a short illness, he slumbered the death of the righteous.

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CHAPTER XI.

INDULGENT readers, cross we now the Channel. Let us take a little survey of the house where the unfortunate Poltrot de Méré's gentle sister, Augusta, is living in harmony, and feels sorrow for her brother's fate, tempered by the sweetest hope of a promised forgiveness towards *repentant* sinners. She knew not who had dealt him his death-blow; but the tidings that he was dead, were wafted from that sister shore, so wrapped in most degrading vice. Augusta recalled Poltrot's saddened, handsome face; no pale despair had been left there; every calmed feature spoke of hope and resignation.

Did the fascinating Edwina Ailesbury droop

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under a passion as new as it was at the time deep? No, hers was not a disposition to indulge long in a dream which could never come to a substance. Her political neighbour's counsels, who assured her "that the best of men were hardly worth a fair girl's constant tears," might have weighed in the balance of the scale which caused her (after a certain number of sighs, and lonely rambles, and pensive songs, and melancholy-strained poems) to return to her more sunny poetry, and the soft language of flowers. A few months more, and the gay girl's laughing brown eyes were as purely youthful in their expression, as if no Poltrot de Méré had ever caused them to shed a tear.

A very handsome young man is walking by Edwina's side. His arm is twined round her waist; and the widowed mother, from her open window, hears with heartfelt pleasure the silvery tones of her gay young laugh.

"Do not speak again of my '*Amore dolore.* and *furore,*' reign of love, bold one," exclaimed

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Edwina, in answer to a whisper from Count Joceleyn; "I am older and wiser now, and consider a love-sick illness is the grave play which comes before the pantomine, and the latter I hail as the most agreeable."

"And my love, then, is naught but an opportune pantomine?"

"Exactly so; if you proved faithless, I would perform the tragedy first. Faint, droop, sigh, cry, and pine; walk up and down my room at night like a bear in his den; look at my meals, but live on the food of a balloon, the love-tuned *air*; grow interestingly thin, then——"

"What then, beloved?"

"What then?" Edwina looked at Count Joceleyn's handsome face; she saw his eyes resting on hers, and she hid her graceful head on his bosom, whilst she spoiled her récit by nothing save the truth, as she whispered, "Joceleyn, no pantomine would come after *that* tragedy."

And Joceleyn imprinted a fond kiss on her

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brow, whilst the happy girl was recompensed for her sincerity.

A few weeks more, and she is sitting at an open window; her clustering brown curls are waving to and fro, as the wind, fanning the casement, disturbs their arrangement; a beautiful blush is on her white skin, and as she bends gracefully over her embroidery frame, her syren-like voice is checking her cousin, Augusta de Méré.

"How blessed a thing it is to be loved," she says. To-morrow, I shall be a bride. Come pretty coz., I must be romantic or modest enough to look more shy than I do, or the whole village will call me 'Countess Boldness:' what a name for a bride! Yet I cannot boast that it is the influence of a bad example; for, if I copied you, Augusta, I should indeed look modest. Why are you sighing? Are you afraid the count loves me better now, than he will after the marriage is over? yet I assure, you I have taken a lease of his love for

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twelve months, with an earnest wish of renewing it after."

"May he love you for ever; may you be as happy as you deserve. I was not thinking of Count Joceleyn; I was wrapped in a dream of the past."

"That is the worst of the three tenses for *you* to dwell upon, sweet coz.; why do you not think of the present, with a perspective view of the future, in the shape of orange flowers and white satin?"

"Oh! you will spoil that flower, Augusta! Pray have a care, or I shall say you are in love. Is it with Lord Holdernese? is it with Colonel de Charpentier, or is it with our handsome, though *à mon goût*, too grave minister?"

"You think I have a capacious heart, Edwina."

"You have at least an *embarras de richesses*," said her lively tormentor.

And at that moment, the grave, and hand-

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some minister was seen coming up the lawn. Edwina looked at her cousin, and Augusta looked low on her embroidery frame, the crimson tide mounting to her brow.

"*Le sage entend un demi mot,*" said Edwina, kissing Augusta, and leaving the room as Mr. Englefield was announced.

* * * * *

Yes, she had pined, that gentle Augusta, she had pined for her brother's loss; and in the stillness of night, as well as during the balmy hours of day, still, still, a prayer quivered on her chiselled lips.

No wonder if a soft melancholy sat upon her interesting countenance; no wonder when such serious thoughts were ever at her heart's core. Not only to lose a beloved relation, but to have been pointed at—she, so good, so gentle—as a murderer's sister.

If grief dimmed not her beauty, it was that it was ever-tempered by holy and soothing thoughts! Inspirations of heavenly hope,

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kindling rays sent refulgently bright from a beatified shore! Many there were who offered their affection to that most graceful being; but Augusta turned away with a sigh approaching to a shudder, when light hearts spoke, and light voices reached her hearing; for *these* she could not feel love, for they reminded her by their very ardour of that fiery energy she had once endeavoured to check in her impetuous brother. And what a fate was his! what a life he had led; what dreary thoughts, what bitter remorse had followed him. But at length one there appeared before the saddened gaze, one who brought tears of holy comfort to the sweet dove-like eyes; one who led the grief-stricken heart to the cool fount of never dying consolation—a holy Protestant minister.

He knew what grief was, for his own family had one by one been cut off in the bigotted Mary's persecuting fury. None save those who *have* steeped their eye-lids in a tear can shed the same sympathizing grief.

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So at length, words hitherto unheeded fell more sweetly upon ears much dulled with grief. Augusta learned—what many grief-stricken persons learn—that when one holy love is dead, another may rise up as pure—for love is a boon from Heaven. It was the early boon bestowed upon our first parents—it is the earliest feeling with which the human heart throbs—it is the commencement of woman's life; she lives in a hemisphere of love.

In infancy she turns crying and moaning, and a mother's voice, a mother's holy love comforts her. Brothers, sister, or companions next claim her love; and then, there arises a brighter, dearer, keener, feeling—the love gentle woman gives to man. What trust there is in that love—that forsaking those with whom her earliest thoughts are associated. Woman binds her destiny to one she has perhaps accidentally met. Strange mystic love—strange! as poets love to call it.

Augusta now felt her heart flutter with a

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new and strange delight; she, who had never thought she could love since her brother's death, felt all the influence of the charm of the gentle voice pouring words of entreaty into her inmost soul. Loving, yet not passionate, speaking of quiet, domestic life.

"I cannot bring thee a title, my own much-beloved Augusta," said the minister. "I can but offer thee a heart, faithful—faithful unto death. Tarry your tears, sweet one; repay me by at least a smile."

Augusta repaid him by more; she returned the gentle pressure of his hand, and her eyes were the first to express all the love she felt. By the power of their bright, glistening answer, the amiable clergyman felt he might press his suit.

Multum in parvo. Two weddings in a day. Cupid's arrows sometimes take long aim, especially if the young and beautiful are the targets on which they mean to rest.

Mrs. Grandison emphatically declared that it

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was more diplomatic of the quiet Mrs. Ailesbury than she should have imagined it was in that lady's composition to manage; whilst all the time the placid widow had been knitting, and (as all *obliging* mothers will do) allowing the Count Jocelyn to win her daughter, and the Minister of the Parish her niece. Which of the two fair creatures, the graceful Edwina or the commanding-looking Augusta, looked best in her bridal attire, as that is *not* an historical event, I leave it to my Readers to decide.

Merrily rung the wedding bells, and merry smiles adorned the face of Edwina, as she rose from the altar, and was greeted, not "Countess Boldness," but the sweet-looking "Countess Jocelyn." Augusta's noble features were less radiant with joy, though her heart was equally full of love, but she was not selfish enough to think only of her own pleasure; her heart breathed a fervent prayer that her brother's soul might dwell at peace, and a tear started

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to her eye at the recollection that he could not be present at her bridal.

Months, however, brought serenity, happiness, and joy to her heart; and, let us hope, that like her merry cousin, she would each year renew the lease of love.

THE END.

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THE

SPANISH GIRL'S REVENGE.

A Tale

OF THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY.

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THE

SPANISH GIRL'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

MERRILY sound our Sabbath bells; welcome call to Christian ears. All ranks of men crowding together, gaily prepare to take their place in the sacred temple; there, rich and poor are under the same roof, type of that heavenly choir, where there is no distinction of persons—where merit claims the highest place. We pass the peasant in his lowly garb, the children of the poor, as well as the wealthy and great, and upon each face a smile appears to linger—a sweet, a happy smile. Some, resting from a long week of toil, seek the nearest place of worship,

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to thank their God for the daily bread they have received, and to invoke a renewed blessing on the ensuing week's labour. Others, in jewels and satin, lay open hearts aching with secret sorrow, and pray for assistance and grace, for pardon and support. How thankful ought we to be, that we live in these happy days, when the voice of Persecution is hushed; when mothers may instruct their lisping babes; when together we may commune in those accents of religion which our Divine Saviour has taught us are "the way, the truth, and the life."

The hands which were raised to shed blood, or to kindle the funeral pile, are cold and powerless, still in the never-waking sleep of death. When we pause and look back into the lapse of years, what pictures present themselves to our imagination. Fellow creatures, possessed, like ourselves, with feeling hearts, and warm affections, loving the world as we do, clinging to life as we do, hurried like sheep to the slaughter, torn from their happy homes, their family *re-*

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unions, their evening fire-sides, and led to torture and to excruciating death. Mary! Bonner! Gardiner! what images of cruelty these three names bring to mind. Unfeminine Mary! was it to execute thy bloody persecutions, that God created thee a *Queen* and a *Woman?* Was it to bury all thy noble and feminine attributes, all Christian-like graces? Alas! we tremble when we reflect, that long ere this, a tribunal of mercy, but also of acknowledged justice, has judged thee for thy unnatural conduct. What victims, by thee made! what family circles severed and disunited! The father, torn from the wife of his choice, for a moment staggers under the load of oppression; he pauses—a word, almost a sign, will save his life; the word trembles on his lips, but his tongue refuses utterance; the high-principled, the gifted soul, has triumphed over the infirmities of the flesh; that soul, purified in the fire of faith, rises triumphant to meet him, who set us himself so glorious an example of constancy in death.

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Readers, will you accompany me to the scene, where my story commences? will you wander with me in far-famed Woodstock? where then dwelt the Princess, afterwards our great Elizabeth. As she walks in the midst of the beautiful grounds, and softly treads the verdant green, her mind is lost in a chaos of great and searching thoughts, and the beautiful influence of the summer's charm is lost upon her, at the recollection that she, the daughter of the proud and despotic Henry, was little better than prisoner to the Queen of the realm, and that Queen was her sister. A tear involuntarily started to Elizabeth's pale-blue eye, and she walked on, without raising her head. Flowers spread their fragrance to the day; a gentle murmur was heard from the zephyr-like motion of the trees; the lilac drooped in the richness of its beauty, and swept the daisied lawn; but the Princess heeded not the charms of Nature, for if she indulged herself in contemplating the universal works of crea-

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tion, she only felt with double bitterness the wish of being free. Only twenty-three summers had passed over the Princess's head, but youth's bright hilarity had long since given place to a look of deep and anxious thought; the blue eye was thoughtful and searching, and there was a quivering restlessness round the parted lips, which indicated a mind ill at ease; whilst her tall, commanding figure, taller-looking still, from her long train, which swept the ground, possessed a majesty, and even a grace, which struck every person who beheld her with the conviction, that a post of responsibility and honour would be well placed under her guidance. Elizabeth's lofty mind, soaring high above the timid beings who composed her Court, sought in vain for some kindred soul, some high genius like her own, to share with her the heavy burden of her thoughts. Upon whom, too, could she place her affections? Not upon her Royal sister, though both daughters of Henry VIII., their minds and pursuits, their virtues

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and faults, were essentially different. Elizabeth was open, generous and vain; Mary, vindictive, cruel, and jealous; to which, add suspicious, and then conceive two such opposite characters assimilating together. True, there were short and passing moments when Mary relented, when, as sisters, they communed together. Then would the young Elizabeth take advantage of the softened eye, and gentler voice, and plead with the fervour of high spirits, and longing desire for more liberty, more change of scene, and more amusements.

Alas! for Elizabeth. Perhaps at the very moment her suit seemed likely to be granted, when Mary gazed upon her sister's animated countenance and princely bearing, and for a moment felt the force of her superiority, some word, too warmly spoken, or accompanied by a look of unconquerable ambition, would dispel the charm. As ice melts and leaves the water, to rise and fall, to bubble and play, disburdened of its heavy surface, so a word recalled Mary's

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natural *hauteur ;* and, as she had not the grace of speech or manner which causes a refusal to be shorn of the prickly thorn of ungraciousness, so the Royal sisters parted as they met—the one as Queen, and her sister's mistress, severe and almost spiteful; the other, indignant and haughty, gave way when she found herself alone, in an unrestrained burst of passion, to the pent-up feelings which she had smothered during her interview with the Queen.

Thus Elizabeth formed her courageous and dauntless character. She banished away frivolity, she scarcely ever indulged in the feminine pursuits of her age, and the times she lived in. Words doubly magnified by time-serving courtiers, were repeated to Mary; and Elizabeth, surrounded by persons appointed by the Queen, found herself daily more rigorously watched.

If Mary treated her Royal sister with severity, not so her husband; Philip of Spain both appreciated and admired Elizabeth's cha-

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racter. He thought her a talented and highly intellectual female; he considered that her amiability of disposition was marred by Mary's severity towards her. He admired the manner in which, without deviating from truth, the Princess answered questions relative to her religious opinions, with a force and yet a caution astonishing for her years and sex, as well as her critical position. Pity succeeded admiration, when Philip beheld the Princess the slave of Mary's tyrannical temper. It was a delicate task for the King-Consort to take Elizabeth's part; Mary's watchful jealousy, the many constructions she might place on his conduct, rendered it very difficult to serve the Princess as openly as Philip wished it. At the same time, Elizabeth possessed a high and Queenly bearing, a voice of authority, an eye of self-willed expression, which marked her, at one glance, as a person likely to have much influence over the people; and the King of Spain felt assured that the Prin-

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cess would be dangerous to Mary's peace, if she were suffered to have unrestrained liberty. Puzzled beyond measure how to act, fearing Elizabeth's influence over him, Philip very seldom visited his Royal sister, and sometimes forgot her altogether, unless her name was mentioned before him.

One morning, perhaps a week, after Elizabeth's first introduction to my readers, a page belonging to her household peeped cautiously through the arras of the tapestry, into a small drawing-room, situated in the Tower of London, where the Court was then held. Seeing that the King was alone, the page stole into the room, and delivering a small note into His Majesty's hands, placed his finger cautiously on his lips, and hastily retreated. The precaution was necessary, for Mary's step was heard in the corridor. The King hastily glanced at the note, recognised Elizabeth's hand-writing, and placed it in his pocket.

"How fares it with your Majesty?" he asked,

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as the Queen entered the apartment, with a slow step and a gloomy brow.

"I doubt me if your Majesty cares much about my health," answered Mary, bitterly; "I shall not ask where you have been spending your long truant hours; but, methinks, that some portion of your time might be devoted to your consort, who is harassed and wearied of a crown without peace, a continued persecution without amelioration, Ministers without sincerity, and a husband without love. My bold sister Elizabeth was perhaps right when she refused her many suitors; and I weary with enforcing her to marry, for she is right enough when she says that the marriage state is not so enviable."

Said she so, the saucy maiden?" answered Philip, laughing, nothing disconcerted by his wife's rebukes; "nay, methinks I will pay the Princess a visit, and convince her that I myself am a Royal exception to her list of unruly husbands. I will convince her Highness, that

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I am a pattern of amiable, conjugal, and—and——"

"Shall I finish your sentence?" said Mary, sneeringly.

"*C'est comme tu voudras,*" replied Philip, gaily.

"Say," continued the Queen, "that you are a pattern of gallantry towards every one but your own wife."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Philip, kissing the angry frown from Mary's brow. "Come, come, no more of this; shall we visit the Princess Elizabeth?"

"I shall not go!" answered the Queen; I am tired with her obstinacy, and moreover, have been entertained during the past week with no other topic save a panegyric account of her wit, grace, and beauty.

"Take heed, giddy girl," continued Mary, in an under-tone; "for high as now stands thy pretensions, and higher still thy pride and *hauteur*, thou may'st yet feel that two daughters of

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Henry VIII. cannot live at the same time, and I am Queen!"

"And I am King, and will protect the Princess," exclaimed Philip, drawn out of his usual caution by the Queen's menacing words, as well as the sinister expression of her countenance.

"Ha!" meaningly exclaimed Mary.

But Philip had left the room, and with angry strides sought his own chamber, where he perused Elizabeth's note; it contained only these words,

"The Princess Elizabeth wishes to speak with His Majesty, Philip of Spain, on a matter of great importance."

The Queen continued some time without moving. Her feelings were highly incensed against Elizabeth; she imagined Philip's words were fraught with meaning; and now she began to feel that pang of jealousy which destroyed her peace, jaundiced her years, and rendered her more an object of scorn than of

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love to her foreign husband. "I will certainly go to Woodstock," thought Philip; "but at the same time, he did not like to leave his Queen until he was reconciled with her; for, although afterwards unable to bear Mary's increasing ill-humour, he left her, and returned to Spain, it was not without endeavouring by good-nature to disperse those clouds which too often hung over the domestic happiness of the ill-assorted pair.

On the present cloudy morning, Philip determined to make his niece, the Lady Eldrida, the means of reconciling him to Mary. This young lady, the daughter of one of Philip of Spain's sisters, was all-powerful with the Queen of England. Less bigotted than her Royal relative, she had considerable enthusiasm in her devotions; and her disposition, so warm where she loved, so violent where she disliked, might, under wise control, have been trained to the noblest deeds. But, alas! the stem was branching forth rapidly, and the fruits of a

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powerful mind were such as could be expected from the tuition she received from her confessor, Gardiner. If the tear of sympathy started to her eye, or her bosom heaved a sigh, when she heard of the persecutions of the Protestants, the tear was dashed away, ere it had hardly appeared on the beautiful lid, and the aching of the heart was treated as a weakness Eldrida ought not to indulge. If the Queen of England ever loved any human being besides her Spanish husband (to whom, notwithstanding her moody humours, she was tenderly attached), it was this young girl. Philip of Spain had brought her with him to England, and she was associated with those soft recollections which will crowd at times in every woman's breast, when she looks back upon days gone by, and especially that *day*, when her fate was linked to another's, by bonds which only death, or the unfortunate disuniting hand of *divorce*, can break asunder. Gratified with the warm reception she met with from her Royal aunt, Eldrida returned her love with corre-

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sponding affection. Blind to those faults others felt to their cost, she looked upon the Queen as a person of superior intellect, who was zealously endeavouring to restore what Gardiner had taught the young girl to consider the right religion in the land; and although her heart revolted at the persecution and the dreadful fate of the Protestants, she was at last persuaded to accuse them of blind obstinacy, for refusing to listen to the persuasive voices which were raised to induce them to recant, and turn to the Roman Catholic faith. We may, during the course of this tale, have occasion to view Eldrida's character in its worst points; we will therefore now turn to her good qualities.

Pitying the agonizing death which the Protestants endured, the young girl's compassion was further strengthened by witnessing an affecting scene. A whole family, father, mother, and children, gained admission to the Tower, and knelt supplicatingly before Mary's throne. They prayed for mercy; they begged for life;

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their tears flowed in torrents on the Royal robes, and their hands convulsively clasped Mary's ermine-bordered mantle. Eldrida, inexpressively moved, joined her tears to the afflicted group, and Mary pondered; she might have relented, but the door opened, and Gardiner, stern, pale, saint-like, and resolute, entered. No words of salutation to the Queen passed the prelate's lips; no expressions of wonder at the scene before him: he drew from his breast an ivory crucifix, which he always carried with him; he approached the unfortunate victims of persecution; "Kiss this cross," he said to the eldest member of the group; "kiss this cross—turn from your heresy and live." With a gesture of firm, though painful determination, each one of the afflicted party refused the sign of recantation, and were conducted back to prison and death. Eldrida turned away from the prelate with a shudder, and from that hour she determined to exert all her influence and devote her time to the instruction of the Protest-

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ants; happy if she could, however seldom, at least occasionally have the pleasure of saving one brand from the raging fire. Eldrida thought the Roman Catholic religion the best form of worship; her motives were therefore pure; ardently she devoted herself to the self-imposed task. She left scenes of gaiety, tore herself from the voice of admiration which everywhere followed her footsteps, and returned, day after day, to the soul-searching object. When she succeeded, then she led the converted person to her Royal aunt, exclaiming—"Saved! saved!" and even Mary, all bigotted and cruel as she was, felt in the young girl's beaming countenance that hers was a labour of love. What a picture to be traced! the young girl repairing each day with renewed vigour to her task of mixed success and disappointment. She pleads, and her large eyes and full Spanish figure dilate into positive majesty! Now she reads, now she prays, now entreats; and whilst her beauty and grace

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increase with her animation, she never thinks that the loveliness of her person has a leading influence even in the high task. Eldrida's was a lofty style of beauty, which almost baffles description, as it is the majesty of the countenance, the expression of the dark liquid eye, which forms the great attraction of a Spanish girl, and indeed of every mental-looking woman. The English rose did not bloom on Eldrida's soft cheek; her complexion was dark, but of that beautiful soft pure brown which harmonizes best with hair of the darkest hue of black. The contour of her figure, her walk, and general bearing were commanding in the extreme. Scarcely above the middle height, her figure was so well expanded, that she appeared taller; but perhaps her greatest attraction was her voice, so melodious, so soft, so enticing, that it was like the sound of a crystal rivulet, falling drop by drop in the cascade below.

Eldrida was sitting in her own room, when

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her uncle gently knocked at the door; she did not hear the sound, for she was wrapped in one of those reveries which the French call *les domes, réveries de jeunes filles.*

"Open your door, *or foi de roi,* I will break it with my sword hilt," said Philip, laughingly; as he entered without further bidding; but his countenance fell, when his quick observation made him aware that Eldrida had been weeping. Not a particle of colour was in her cheeks, and her large eyes had an expression of deep wretchedness.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Philip.

"Nothing at all, my very particular Uncle," answered Eldrida, endeavouring to force a smile.

The King, however, could not be deceived; he put his arm round the young girl's waist, and drawing her towards him—

"Eldrida," he said, "we must have no more of this dull business; you really must not go to the heretics any more. Let Gardiner and Bonner

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do their business; if theywill not repent at their bidding, so much the worse. Nay, I must insist on your abandoning your pursuits. You look harassed and ill. Let me see; you are almost nineteen; why, Eldrida, I have neglected you, but nevertheless we can make up for lost time, and, before long, sweet niece, you must make your choice. The Swedish Ambassador—how like you him?"

"I have never thought of marrying," answered Edrida, quickly.

"Nay but it is time, then. Would that I were one of your *preux Chevaliers*. I will speak to the Queen on the subject."

"No, no, pray do not think of me; I am happier as I now am," answered Eldrida, with a sigh.

The sigh was scarcely audible, but Philip heard it. He looked fixedly at the young girl. Perhaps he was more severe than usual; perhaps she felt some secret sorrow: be this as it may, Eldrida burst into tears.

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There are some dispositions who so soon yield to the emotion of weeping, that very little notice is taken of the circumstances which cause the tears to flow; but Eldrida's was one of those high and daring spirits, who think it a weakness to indulge in grief, and her uncle, never before, since the days when in infancy she dwelt with him, had seen one tear dim her eye. The young girl's weeping was now very violent from its unusual occurrence, and the King, failing to console her, left the room with a disturbed countenance and a painful feeling at his heart, that all was not as it should be with Eldrida.

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CHAPTER II

We left the Princess Elizabeth walking in the grounds which surround her habitation. There was not anything particularly soothing in the contemplation of the past, nor in the fancied visions of the future, which sprung up before her mind; but unwilling to enter into conversation with the ladies of her suite, the Princess frequently wandered about until late in the evening, and on her return not unfrequently spent an hour or two alone, either reading or studying.

"It is no use wasting life in vain hopes, or useless regrets," exclaimed Elizabeth; "I feel

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a secret conviction that my day of glory will come; that Mary will leave the crown without a successor; and when I am Queen of this great realm, England shall say, that the Princess Elizabeth knew how to employ the solitude of her early days, by spending them in improving her mind. Poor England! my heart is with you, and I sympathize with your sufferings; and sooner would I exchange place with the meanest person of the realm, than, following the example of my bigotted sister, kindle again the funeral pile."

Alas! how little are we masters of our actions! What would the wise-minded Princess have said, if any one had appeared to her, and predicted her future life; have foretold how the annals of her great history would be tarnished by the recital of her unfeminine conduct towards the unfortunate Mary of Scots; her weakness and subsequent treatment of the condemned Essex. And the great Princess, who during her young days cared only for the

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beauty of the mind, when she was approaching her seventieth year, became so foolishly and blindly vain, as to allow her courtiers, and even foreign ambassadors, to compliment her on her beauty.*

The Princess retired into the house, and amused herself for some time in arranging the flowers she had culled during her ramble. After completing her task, she was on the point of ringing the bell, in order to return to her attendants, when the door opened, and a venerable man stood before her.

"My good Cranmer," exclaimed the Princess, rising, and placing a chair for the prelate, "you do indeed surprise me; we will have lights."

"No, no," answered the Prelate, as the

* Hume brings forward two notes in corroboration of this fact; as if the historian feared persons would hardly credit the circumstance unless authenticated. "See," says "Birch's Memoirs, vol. II., p. 442; and Sydney's Letters, vol. II., p. 171."

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Princess was on the point of ringing a little silver bell by her side; "my words must be spoken quickly and secretly, and I care not for the light, for my body will soon repose in deeper darkness than this. Princess, I have come to bid you a last farewell."

"Gracious Heaven! can it be true?" answered Elizabeth. "No, no, dear Father, they dare not do it. You are surely not talking in earnest?"

"Alas! I speak too truly," replied Cranmer, "and I shall soon be a heap of cinders; think you there is aught to be gained from Gardiner and Bonner? The latter stills his heart against the very name of humanity, and practises on himself the very cruelties he orders to others. You have marked his shrivelled hand, Lady?"

"Oh, yes," answered Elizabeth; he held his hand to the candle, until the sinews and veins shrunk and burst; and, sometimes he will whip the prisoners with his own hands, until he is

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tired of the violence of the exercise; but, perhaps, Gardiner will not be so obdurate."

"Ah! I repeat it," said Cranmer, "there is nothing to be hoped for from these men, and God's will be done."

"But it is not, it cannot, be His will that one so good and holy as you are, should perish by the hands of his own creatures. I will fall at Mary's feet—she is my sister, and must pity me; I will place myself between her and the door, and Queen Mary must trample over Henry VIII.'s daughter before she escapes my fervent prayer."

"You fall at Mary's feet," replied Cranmer; "then would Henry the Eighth have some trouble to recognise his daughter. Never, never; sooner would I that my blood now stained this floor, than see the Princess Elizabeth humble herself to that haughty woman. Oh, Princess! how vain it is to trust to the promises of the great! Once I rendered your Royal sister a great service, and she earnestly

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promised to serve me, if it were ever in her power. How graciously she has kept her word."

"Art thou sure, good prelate, that thy doom is sealed?" said the Princess.

"Quite sure," answered Cranmer; "and before to-morrow morning dawns, I must be in my prison; but I have sought this interview to speak with your Highness on an important subject. Are we quite safe?"

"Quite so," answered the Princess; "but, in order not to be disturbed, if you will retire into the inner room, I will at once order lights."

Fearing any interruption this time, the prelate consented, and withdrew into the next room, which led to the Princess Elizabeth's private suite of apartments. The latter gave orders to be left alone, pleading indisposition; nor was this statement incorrect, for she felt a chill of horror, in thinking that before many

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evenings closed, the venerable prelate's career in this world would have closed.

When Cranmer returned, Elizabeth gazed through her overflowing eyes on the prelate's ghastly face. He appeared faint, and the Princess earnestly besought him to take some refreshment.

"Kind Princess," said the prelate, "allow me to make use of the short time I have, in communicating my dying wishes to you; in a week I shall be no more."

Elizabeth seized the venerable man's hand; she pressed it within her own: that hand, warm with youthful energy, trembled and almost recoiled when she felt the cold pressure of the prelate's. One large tear after the other fell from her blue eyes, but she was speechless.

"I harass your mind, young Princess, but, nevertheless, I must begin with the early part of my persecution. In an evil hour I was tempted to recant, and to acknowledge myself a convert to that religion which can sanctify

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such deeds of horror as we daily witness in our unhappy country. I recanted; but, Lady, you cannot understand the agony of my feelings, the longing for a continuation of life, which, in spite of myself, stole over my senses, when Gardiner and Bonner multiplied by strong language the horrors of a death at the stake. My blood froze, my heart trembled, my eyes saw through a thick mist; I was beside myself; I feared, I trembled, I durst not die; I—I—recanted! My prison walls still confined me, and none save Gardiner and Bonner witnessed the scene of my unworthy weakness. Not satisfied with my signature, they declared that I must openly proclaim my conversion to their tenets. Then the full force of my sin rushed before me; I remembered that the Holy One, the Lord of all, suffered for us; I remembered, too, that he had declared that "His cross was heavy to bear;" that if we would be His, indeed, we must leave father, and mother, and brother, and every

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tie which binds us to earth. Religion comforted my sinking heart; I stilled the weak desire of life; I lulled human feelings into slumber; I hushed all worldly ideas in the chaos of oblivion; I prayed for grace and strength. Now will I lean on the Rock of ages, and when this soul forsakes its tenement of clay—when the flames have played their destructive part around me—then shall I find a glorious and everlasting reward. Princess, I can suffer now, and not fear the blow."

"Pray let me save you" exclaimed Elizabeth; "that fiery persecution must surely cease. Do as I do: worship God in your own manner, but do it secretly; God will accept your prayers."

"Lady, your position is different to mine," answered the Prelate; I am called upon to declare openly my religion, whilst the Queen will never expect that of you. If the ties of nature and the bonds of affection do not restrain her, she will consult policy. You are beloved by the whole nation, and an open trial of your faith

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would draw the public eye towards you, which the Queen wishes to avoid."

"I believe you are very right," answered the Princess; "but all this argument cannot make me waver. If my life is worth preserving, yours is more so. Still live, good prelate, to guide and instruct those who are led from the right path of religion: fly, hide yourself awhile; I will assist you."

"Be calm, Princess," answered the prelate; let not your youthful spirits tempt me to err. Indeed it is not in my power to escape, if I had the wish."

"Then how came you here, good prelate?"

"The Lady Eldrida assisted me, and I gave her my word that I would return. Am I not right in keeping my promise?"

"The Lady Eldrida has much power," answered the Princess, somewhat bitterly.

"She has," answered the prelate, entirely mistaking the meaning of Elizabeth's words.

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But, all-powerful as she is, I would not that on my account she incurred the displeasure of such men as Gardiner or Bonner. Her life would scarcely be safe, for their revenge is sure and deadly; and surely, to the young, life is even more valuable than to the old, who know that the next step they take will be into the grave."

"Ah! it is strange how sweet is life," replied Elizabeth; "how we cling to it, even when beset by adversities, and borne down with grief. How beset with perilous shoals and fatal sands is our pilgrimage through this world. Sometimes I envy the peasant, singing as he daily repairs to his arduous toil; I envy the careless laugh, when lo! the next morrow dawns, and the enviable happiness has oft-times fled; some unforseen calamity has over-taken him. I turn away with a sigh, and am forced to acknowledge that 'All here below is vanity, and vexation of spirit.'"

"Ah! your Highness——"

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"Nay, nay," interrupted the Princess, "not your Highness; call me sweet Elizabeth, or sweet lady, as in the days of my childhood, when first I heard divine truths fall from thy tongue; then thou lovedst me with parental love, such as a father loves his child."

"Ay, as I *do love my child*," emphatically replied the prelate.

"Thy child!" exclaimed the Princess, starting from her seat; "and yet thou canst not joke."

"It is time to explain myself," answered Cranmer. "Lady, yours is not one of those narrow minds who can allow their intellects and opinions to waver with every passing tenet of the day; surely, if you know aught of the human heart, you are aware, that, although some resemble more than others the bright image in which man was originally created. Still, human inclination, human affections, human admiration of Nature's most beautiful work of creation — woman! is implanted in every

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heart. Although the clergy are now forbidden to marry, it was not always thus, and every right-judging mind must see the utter falseness of a doctrine, which can deny man the privilege ordained by Heaven itself. When was Adam's happiness complete? Though dwelling in Eden's sweet garden, where ever-blooming bowers were planted by his Maker's hands, where streamlets of freshest waters flowed, where fruits of richest ripeness grew; in that abode of peace and happiness, where scenery, harmony, freshness, all, *all* that could enthral the senses, and pour delight into the soul existed, even then, Adam's happiness was not completed until, waking from his deep trance, by his side stood the fairest of the Heavenly creation—woman, in her first innocence and beauty. And when the bright and glowing scene changed—when man, wretched, fallen, degraded and sinful, spurned by the angels, triumphed over by the devil of wickedness, the crawling, deceitful, insidious serpent—was ba-

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nished for ever from his dwelling-place, the fair garden of Eden; then Eve, equally wretched, more culpable, followed her outcast husband, united to him by a tie, considered binding by his all-seeing Master. Alas! the pleasure of loving may be defined, but the anguish of parting from the object of a long-cherished love can never be depicted. I never see a happy couple, newly united by the voice of the Church and deep voice of love, but a dream of the future flashes before me, at the very moment when my smiles ought to co-mingle with the bridal pair. Alas! I think, now both united, who first will break the wedded tie? Who will be the surviving mourner? Who will whisper, "go, join thy Creator; we shall meet in a world above?" When I first looked upon my blushing bride, I thought not of all this, though I have paused upon it since; nor dreamed I that consumption had implanted her deadly seeds, that corruption sat upon that glowing cheek, and the fire of the destroying blaze within was kindled in the azure

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eye. My beautiful bride survived for two years the birth of her only infant—years spent in agony, baffling, as it were, in the arms of death, till at length, calmly resigned, the victim of consumption died, as June's pale rose, before the hand of Time had struck the root. Italia's balmy skies availed naught: there poets love to sing their strains; there the canopy of Heaven smiles brightest; there the purple fruit ripens to strengthen man's body by the juice of its lustrous pendant fruit; but to the dying, sinking body, what climate can restore fresh life, if it is God's will to recall the spirit to its original dwelling-place? Grief for the loss of my beautiful wife for a time deprived me of the use of my reason; the lovely babe, slumbering in her cradle, awoke and lisped her mother's name. Oh, heart-rending call! in vain the tiny hands were stretched forth; in vain the azure eyes wandered about; they rested but upon a disconsolate father. When a mother brings a helpless babe into the world of sin, can she feel the strong

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affection twined round each delicate fibre of the heart? I cannot think it. My babe's cries were different to other babes'; and already a look of pensiveness sat on the features scarcely yet formed. Poor babe! poor babe! I grew weary of its cries; and she might have been neglected, when a kind hand was stretched forth to watch over the delicate infant; and my blessing—the fervent blessing of a father—attend this friend, wherever she may be. The lady I speak of, whose name is Mrs. Stracey, arrived in Italy a few months after the death of my wife; she was accompanied by her little boy, Alphonso, a handsome, noble-faced child, scarcely five years old. The lady was attired in the deepest black; she never spoke of her husband; there was an indescribable something stamped on her lofty, intelligent countenance, which spoke of much suffering: there was a tremulous sweetness about the voice, which seemed to indicate that smothered, but soft affection, was still busy at her heart.

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Her dark-eyed boy was as different to his mother as an obscure November fog to June's celestial sky. He could scarcely be called spoilt, for Mrs. Stracey suffered not one wayward wish to be gratified; but even when with prompt obedience the boy desisted from some forbidden sport, there was a haughty toss of the well-turned head, a quick rolling of the large dark eye, and, above all, a slight curl of the lip, which made the mother's heart beat; and once I heard her mutter to herself—"How like his father!" a deep sigh followed this remark. There are sorrows into which no human eye dare pry; there are characters, with whom grief is too sacred to be discussed. Unhappy, Mrs. Stracey evidently appeared, but the word *guilty* associated with her pure expression of countenance, could not be coupled.

We were then at Florence. Mrs. Stracey resided at a beautiful villa, near the Palazzo Pitti. Her grace, her excessive beauty, her

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subdued look of sorrow, could not fail attracting attention; but it was evidently, not the lady's wish to receive admiration. As, day after day, she took her accustomed walk by the side of the flowing Arno, her greatest pleasure seemed to be embracing my little motherless Constance; she pressed her soft cheek to hers with a fondness, which seemed to say—"I want such a gentle being to comfort me!" Then she turned to her high-spirited boy, who was bounding before her, and her large blue eyes filled with tears.

The city of Florence is divided into two unequal parts, by the river Arno, over which four handsome bridges are erected.

One fine morning, my child, accompanied by an attendant, was taken for her usual walk, when the nurse, in a moment of forgetfulness, placed the infant on one of the projecting flat pieces of iron of the bridge, that she might be pleased with the view around. The child, no doubt thought little of the scenery, but was

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delighted beyond measure with her elevated situation. Constance was at the time little more than two years old; she was so delicately made, so fair, so sylph-like, that it was perfectly wonderful how swiftly she trod, as if her light feet scarcely touched the ground. Suddenly the child darted away from her maid, and before the terrified attendant could look round, the agile creature bounded down the narrow railing, which continued until it ended in a slope, and before an exclamation could be heard, Constance had reached the terminus and was caught in Mrs. Stracey's arms. A smile of triumph played round the infant's dimpled cheek; but not so her deliverer's: had Constance paused one moment, had her tiny foot stumbled only half an inch, a watery grave awaited the daring infant; whilst, had she not been caught in Mrs. Stracey's arms, she would have been dashed with violence to the ground, at the terminus of the bar on which she stood, as the distance to the foot-path was

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beyond a child's reach. Happy moment, when Mrs. Stracey clasped the child to her bosom, whilst Constance fainted from fright and excitement—when a numerous concourse of persons assembled on the bridge, all eagerly discoursing the child's perilous position. I say that I felt deep gratitude for Mrs. Stracey's timely assistance, and a train of circumstances requiring my presence in England, I left my child under her deliverer's care. Years passed, and Constance improved as she grew; the lily scarcely surpasses her snowy skin, and the rose might own her cheek its rival; her hair, of silken softness, is of the colour silk-worms spin their fragile fabric, encircled by a slight shade of darkness from Italia's sun; in tapered ringlets down her shoulders it streams, and shades, without concealing, her faultless features. Timid as the forest deer, Constance is firm in one, alas! too fatal point—she is a stanch Protestant. She has dwelt in the midst of Popery, she has witnessed its most solemn rituals; and

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her feelings are only more strongly drawn towards that pure, that simple, yet heart-searching religion, which our Saviour came down from glory on high to inculcate. "Princess, my fate is sealed, and so will my innocent child's be, unless a strong and powerful arm is stretched forth to protect, and save her. Lady, it is worthy of your high hand."

"But where is Mrs. Stracey?" quickly answered Elizabeth.

"There is a fearful mystery about that unhappy lady," said Cranmer. "Her son entered the army, and by his courage gained rapid advancement; but, following the King of Spain to England, change of climate enfeebled him, and he became dangerously ill. The unhappy parent, who doted on her son with a deeper love than even maternal affection generally bestows on her offspring, settled her affairs, and, accompanied by Constance, repaired to England. Affectionately Constance took her place by the invalid's couch, and in her pure

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heart grew a daily stronger flame, so unusual, so strange, to the timid girl, that one day, when I paid my daily visit to the country seat near Windsor, which Mrs. Stracey inhabited, I was struck by my child's pale countenance.

"I do not think you are quite well, my love," said Mrs. Stracey, drawing her towards her.

"I am quite well," answered Constance, returning her caress, "but—but, there is something here—I do not understand," and she placed her hand upon her heart; "I will go to Alphonzo, and as he looks upon me, I feel comforted."

Constance rushed from the room, and Mrs. Stracey burst into tears. Before I could recover my astonishment, or offer condolence, the lady began speaking in passionate but mysterious language.

"Weak, short-sighted mortals that we are," she exclaimed; "why had I not foreseen this blow? Constance loves my son—and he never can be hers."

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"Why not?" I asked, piqued at what. I thought pride.

"Oh! do not look proudly at me," answered the afflicted lady, nor pry into what I dare not reveal; a terrible oath binds me to secresy; and should memory fail from the intenseness of pain which I feel from the restraint, still, still, I may not speak! Alphonzo belongs not to me. What did I say? Why did you start? Yes, yes! he is my son, my only son; the noblest blood flows through his veins—he is *not* the child of sorrow or shame, and yet I—what have I said? did I reveal it? Cranmer, take away your lovely girl—let not sorrow sit upon her brow; pleasure alone should fan that angelic face. Alphonzo cannot marry—no, no, I must not speak!" More words she uttered, but they were more incoherent, more wild than the first. I called loudly to Constance—I rushed up stairs—I found her sitting by Alphonzo's couch. Wrapped in a large cloak, lined with crimson silk, he lay, with scarcely

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any index that life was in the tall body, for it looked still and pale as statuary marble; not a drop of blood appeared to circulate in the transparent veins, so pure, so smooth, was the brow over which clustered the richest black hair, making what was in fact an olive complexion, appear of dazzling whiteness in the darkened chamber. The large dark eyes were subdued, and rested pensively on Constance, who, sitting on a low seat by the couch, listened to words which, no doubt, though I heard them not, were breathed in the tenderest spirit of love. 'Unhappy girl,' I exclaimed drawing her away, 'come, come to your father's arms; come away from trial and sorrow; come dwell where hopeless love shall not blanch your cheeks, nor your innocent smiles be withered by the destroyer's frowns.' Before the invalid could understand the scene, before Constance could recover her astonishment, she was on horseback by my side, and cantering away from the home where her young heart lingered. Then came

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the time when the persecution began; when the clergy's marriages were not considered lawful, and I concealed my Constance with her faithful attendant in a little cottage, by a lonely moor; and as the wind blew, and the rain pattered down, as I kissed away her starting tears, how my heart was rung; how I—no I did *not* curse, but I regretted the hour of her birth.

"No more of this; my time is short. Lady, I adjure you, by the remembrance of your injured mother, by your hopes of the future, by your recollection of your younger days, to every soft, to every feminine feeling, I apply to you. Oh, protect, protect my child. I will send her to you; call her Constance Comines, which is the name of the lady the French Queen intended sending you, for a maid in waiting. No one besides yourself and the person who brought you the news know, that fearing Queen Mary's irritable humour, the young lady refused to leave her native country. Your messenger told me the circumstance, for I had known him

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abroad. Take my child, Princess; she will wait upon you, she will love you, she will twine round your heart, and bless your name. Take the fatherless girl to your Royal arms. God will reward you, God will bless you. He is the father of the small and the great, of the rich and the poor. Take her—take her."

Sobs choked his voice, but Elizabeth's mingled with his. The father felt his prayer was heard; and when Elizabeth looked up, when she drew her handkerchief from her eyes, the old man had eft, and she was alone.

Flow on, flow on, tears of sympathy; pour down from your crystal cell. Fear not to moisten the fair cheek, to swell the beauteous eye; there is a secret hallowed feeling in the scalding, falling drop. In after years, amidst scenes of trouble, when love and its attendant passions were harassing a Queenly breast; when, after hearing the Countess of Nottingham's confession, she shook the dying lady in her bed, when she burst from her, with the hardened

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words, "*God may forgive you, but I never can;*" when she refused consolation, sustenance, or advice; when she lay down on the hard floor instead of her splendid couch; when she raved for the beheaded Essex, then lay down again and died, what then would Elizabeth have given for the relief of tears—for one of those sobs of early feeling and of a softer heart!

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CHAPTER III.

THERE are some natures upon whom affection takes a stronger hold than on others; and, generally speaking, a naturally cold heart, when once warmed by the tie of love, of whatsoever nature it may be—on such a heart the fire will feed, until every particle of it beats with equal warmth. Philip of Spain's coldness towards his English wife is too generally known to require speaking of; and that rich monarch, who boasted "that the sun never set upon his vast dominions," could not boast that the sunshine of affection equally warmed his heart

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towards his wife. In one, point, however, the Royal couple always agreed—they both doted with fond affection upon Lady Eldrida; and her pensive, sometimes mournful, expression of countenance, was strongly in her favour. Her Royal relatives joined deep sympathy with their love for the Spanish girl, whose morbidly sensitive mind dwelt with warmth upon little acts of kindness.

It is, indeed, very true, that upon "the smallest trifles hang the sum of human happiness;"* and none felt the maxim so strongly as the dark-eyed Spanish girl. She was far from the scenes of her early days—away from the warmth which is not only felt in the sky, but eloquently spoken in the rich Spanish eye, in the quick gesture, and the rounded, voluptuous lips. She could not accustom herself to the equanimity of an English disposition; with her, all was love or hate; she knew no medium, and

* Hannah More.

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her hand could one hour have grasped a person in friendship, or drawn a stiletto the next to pierce an enemy's heart. Unhappy girl! she never paused to check this extravagant temper—her will was her law. Wild as the Arab steed upon which, in her infant days, she rode, nor place, nor time, nor danger could stop the impetuous girl in her uncontrolled career. And yet, under much self-will, under much pride, and much obstinacy, there lurked the seeds of a better nature. A pity it was that some skilful hand was not stretched forth to quell the stormy passions; to speak of gentleness, of meekness; to pour words of encouragement where they were wanted, and also to speak severely, if required. Better let the righteous man reprove, than listen to the plaudits of the unworthy.

In Philip of Spain, Eldrida found an indulgent, an affectionate and generous friend. Like his niece he was enthusiastic, and would often do a deed of goodness, more because there was

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a tincture of romance, or a display of energy in the action, than because it was enjoined to us by a Just and Holy One "to weep with those who weep."

Did Eldrida like her uncle? She doted on him; she watched his every look; she felt a glowing delight in having his praise; she hung upon his words, and if she displeased him, she knew no greater pain. Willingly would she on these occasions have made any sacrifice, but the words of contrition died away. Pride, in its worst form, interposed; pride, in its most insidious garb, clothed in obstinacy. Deeply feeling her uncle's displeasure, yet unwilling to confess her fault, Eldrida was on these occasions intensely miserable, and a severe headache, which confined her to her room, was generally the consequence; and the haughty Philip of Spain, who bowed not his pride to any living being besides, was the first to conciliate her. On the last occasion, however, that Philip saw his niece, he was more distressed than angry. Long after he left her,

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he paced his room in great agitation. The Princess Elizabeth's note was entirely forgotten, and Woodstock far from his thoughts. Tired of walking, Philip advanced to a bureau, and leaning his head on the slanting desk, indulged in a reverie, deep and absorbing.

Twice he fancied he heard his name, and did not raise his head; but at length, hearing it repeated, he looked up, and angrily asked who dared intrude upon his solitude?

"Ha! is it you, Calipsa?" he said, looking fixedly at Eldrida's old attendant, who appeared quite heedless of the angry tone in which Philip spoke.

"I thought," said the attendant, slowly and firmly, "that I might be of some service to your Majesty, who appears annoyed about the Lady Eldrida."

"Annoyed," said Philip, in bitterness pronouncing the word; "Eldrida's agitation has unmanned me—has wrung my heart to its deep

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core. Is there one human being I love on earth? it is Eldrida. Is there one whom I regard with a pure and devoted love? it is Eldrida. Calipsa, you, who, following my footsteps, know much of me, and oft-times can read my very thoughts—you, who know what none save yourself even dreams of—still I defy you to understand the whole delight there is in feeling that the ties of nature have given me a *right*, an undisputed *right*, to dote, to love, to look with delight upon my niece. All other beautiful and intellectual females I may meet have other ties, other friends to care for, and there is no pure affection in loving one of these. But Eldrida is an orphan; I am her guardian, her protector; hitherto I have filled her heart, and she has cared for no other love to take place of the affection she has for me. Calipsa, your directions were plain; I told you I intended her hand to be given to one of the most illustrious persons in Europe. With the dowry I intend for her, no obstacle would

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arise, and her beauty would enrich the gift. But fondly loving her as I do, I did not wish her, in sweet blushing girlhood, to leave me for a more binding, a holier love. I intended seeing her grow up to womanhood; I contemplated being within reach of her smiles, of her looks of affection. Eldrida, in thy haughty mood of pride, I love thee still; if thou art unhappy, I cannot laugh, and to-day I left thee bathed in tears; poor Eldrida——— old woman, beware of my vengeance if you have betrayed the trust I reposed in you; beware, beware! Who does my niece love? for some secret passion is hidden in her breast."

Calipsa raised her bony figure to its utmost heighth, and approaching the King, whispered in his ears.

"'Tis false," replied Philip, pushing the old woman rudely from him; "'tis false as thou art. Now hear me, old crone: shrine thy conscience; take thy last farewell of earth; thou shalt die."

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"Ha! ha! ha! King of Spain, is that thy dread punishment? Thinkest thou I have not long enough borne the burden of life? Look at my sunken eye and shrivelled skin. Ah, not half so sunken as my broken heart. Who would think Calipsa had once been blithe and gay; that she rose with the sun, and sung with the lark; that Andalusia boasted not a bonnier lass, when I was trusted by—"

"Mention not her name," interrupted Philip, placing his hand on Calipsa's mouth. Calipsa, when I fain would speak calmly, I cannot; my anger masters me. I have marked Vesuvius' volcano; I have marked the gradual storm which shook the earth, arise. I have stood nigh that burning mountain, where Pliny lost his life; where Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried under the stones and ashes; but, Calipsa, the dreadful eruption does not take place suddenly; for years the mountain will send forth smoke, sometimes throwing out stones, scoriæ, and cinders. Then appears more

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smoke, and from the mountain's intestines burst forth rumbling, strange, unfathomable noises; and during the night the sublime sight of the most beautiful fireworks may be seen. Beautiful did I call it? At last the curious dare only gratify their curiosity at a distance, and venture only to gaze through telescopes at a sight too grand, too terrific for human eyes. When the awful crash arrived, windows shattered to atoms, shrieks rent the air, drowned by the sound of the burning crater; fountains of liquid, transparent fire, arose; puffs of dense smoke succeeded a pale, electrical fire, playing in zig-zag lines. The fire spread, the wind carried it backwards and forwards. Awful, dreadful, soul-searching sight! to what shall I liken Mount Vesuvius? Start not, Calipsa; it is like the human heart. Gradual at first is the work of fiery passions—slow, indeed, but sure; burning, wearing, tearing the human heart; then bursting forth, in jealousy, revenge, malice, and every hateful

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passion. Calipsa, this must not be Eldrida's fate; I will stop her from falling into the volcano of unhappiness. Oh! 'tis a dreadful thing to mark youth's grief; to see the open brow lined with untimely marks; to watch the shades of care falling upon a creature God has made naturally blithe and gay; to see youth's buoyant laugh blighted, and the fire of the eye dimmed. Tell me, is there yet time? I will give young——, let me say the name—young Stracey—a post in a distant army. Will time work the cure, Calipsa?"

"Ah! your Majesty, the Lady Eldrida is not like these cold English girls; and love, which to them is a traffic of money, a change of name, a position in society, is to our southern blood a passion deep and lasting; it will dull the fire of our maidens' eyes, it will eat away the damask tint, will sear the heart, will fever the brain—but such love cannot change or roam. Though ocean's billows, placed between them, may divide each other's gaze; though

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tossed by affliction's fury, the heart may sink, it will not turn. Philip of Spain, curse me if thou wilt—revile me, spurn me—but listen to thy slave—sever not united hearts."

"Calipsa, you think not of what you ask," furiously answered Philip; "you, who know the revenge which lurks in Spanish blood, would you have me trust Eldrida's happiness to one who will hate the friend of her youth; who will despise and abhor me? Even now, he may know the secret of his birth; and the oath which bound his dead mother to secresy may have been slighted ere this; and when he hears all, when he knows that * * * Enough, enough, this must not be; help me, advise me; here is gold, plenty of gold."

"Keep your money," answered Calipsa, "I want none of your gold; clothe not your words in silken vesture. Speak plainly, even as I speak. Advice do you want? No, no; you want me again to sin, to break more hearts. Speak plainly, but offer me not gold; Calipsa

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despises the Royal hand which gives it, and serves your Majesty with the same blind fondness which causes a dog to caress his master's hand, even when he beats him. Recompense! What reward is my due for sending my soul to everlasting punishment?"

"Nonsense, woman, you shall be absolved!"

"Ha! ha! do I believe in those rites? Ay, once I did, when, as a girl, I confessed sins, which now weigh light as wafers in the heavy balance against me. But the veil of Popery, the falsity of confession, where no amendment ensues, is torn from my eyes."

"What! art thou confessing thyself a heretic?" said the King, forcing a smile.

"Would I were as good as some of those heretics," was the evasive reply.

"Well," answered the King, "the Princess Elizabeth could scarce have spoken better;" and at the mention of her name, he remembered his note. Hastily writing a few lines, he gave them to the old woman. "Deliver

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this to my Lord Gardiner. And now leave me —more of this sad business anon."

* * * * *

And Calipsa was left alone—alone with thoughts of deep and secret sin. There was One, the wretched woman knew, who could read every guilty line written on her hardened heart; there was One, she knew, who could take revenge, passing man's retaliating revenge, on the evil she had done. Burning drops of sorrow coursed down her cheeks; sighs, deep and loud, echoed from their pent-up abode.

"Of one sin, however, I am innocent," exclaimed Calipsa, talking aloud, in the bitterness of her grief. "Agnes Stracey lives; my hand did not—poison her."

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CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Calipsa returned to Eldrida, she found her very ill. The fire of fever sat upon her dark eye, and tinged her southern cheek. Her hair was negligently thrown back, her voice was hasty and imperious.

"Where is my uncle?" she asked.

"He is going out."

"I must see him."

"Lady, he is displeased."

"What care I?" answered Eldrida; "I have given him no cause for displeasure."

"Lady, when the provident swallow flie

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from her nest, it is not the present danger she fears; she builds her anxiety upon the future."

"The future," replied Eldrida, bitterly; "and what of the future for me? When once young Stracey is free, he will forget the Spanish Girl, who loves him more than all the fair-eyed English beauties. Though he bears an English name, I know not why, I cannot trace his English origin. There is a warmth in his dark eye, an enthusiastic ardour in his voice, a something which is too indescribable to dwell upon. Calipsa, often in thy passing moods of humour, I have listened to thy tales with pleasure, and oft-times pleasant things were presaged, such as that I should be happy and great. Come now near my bedside, and say, shall I gain young Stracey's love?"

There was a pause. Eldrida raised her large eyes, now flushed with fever, to the old woman's deeply-furrowed countenance. "Lady Eldrida, indeed I dare not think of the future. If you continue self-willed, difficulties must

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arise; your enemy is your own heart, fortitude your best friend. Forget young Stracey—he never spoke to you of love?"

"Never, Calipsa; and still he is the theme of my thoughts, the object of my dreams—my first, my only love. The word "love" is imprisoned in his breast, but it lurks in his smile; it trembles on his lips, and eloquently speaks in the radiant glances of his searching eye. Wretched I can be—I can smother my sobs, I can bid the tear cease to flow; but if I thought his destiny were chained to another's, nor place nor time should stand before me; never should he clasp his bride—sooner shall my hand pierce her heart."

Calipsa started with horror; but seeing the delirium of a high fever approaching, she administered a soothing potion, darkened the room, and at length, after restless, tossing, and incoherent exclamations, the Spanish Girl fell into one of those heavy dozes which follow the excitement of fever.

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When Calipsa knew by the heavy breathing that all pain was hushed, and that uninterrupted sleep had taken possession of her patient, she stationed a domestic in the anteroom; and clothing herself in a shawl, and putting a large bonnet over her head, she quickly but noiselessly trod the almost mystic corridors, and descending the winding stairs, now mounting a few steps, now descending, until, by the light of a dim lantern, she found herself in a small turret, where she paused. She saw the guard outside the door leading to the opposite side of the passage; his back was towards her, and by the attitude in which he stood, he appeared drowsy. In breathless haste Calipsa drew forth a key from under her shawl, and in less than a second was in a small, damp room. Seated by a small table, was young Stracey, looking pale and intensely unhappy. After asking after Lady Eldrida's health, he remained silent, unable to command enough energy to enter into conversation.

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"Young man, would you like to leave your dungeon?"

"Certainly," replied Alphonzo Stracey; "especially as I know not why I am here."

"Yes you do," answered Calipsa, sternly. "Your foreign Christian name, coupled with your English surname, your foreign appearance, give you a suspicious look; and you refuse to satisfy my Lord Gardiner's scruples, besides being only an indifferent Roman Catholic."

"The latter opinion of me I care not to dispute; an angel of purity taught me that the mild Protestant religion was the right path in which to walk, and one feather in the scale would make me a heretic; but such a confession now is not necessary. As to the secret of my birth, I would give more than my Lords Gardiner or Bonner to discover it."

"Do you mean to say, you know not your parents?"

"Not my father," answered Alphronzo; "and even had I deemed it generous to let merciless

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men know my mother's place of abode, I cannot do it, for when I returned home one afternoon I found it desolate, and no traces of my mother's future abode was left to cheer my lonely steps. A note from her informed me that she was quite safe, and that one day, perhaps, I should see her again, but not yet. Although I can scarcely refrain making inquiries about her, my mother once enjoined me not to mention her name to any one, and I dare not disobey her, for fear harm should arise."

"Young man, your mother is right; and now listen to me. I know more of your early life than you do yourself; never speak of your mother to any one: she is safe, but one imprudent word may forfeit her life. And hearken further. The King of Spain will befriend you; heed not his hasty words, his heart is good; but beware on one point: give not encouragement to the Lady Eldrida, for she thinks you love her. Do you not?"

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"I know not what right you have to ask such a question," answered Philip; "but if the answer can save Lady Eldrida from one unpleasant pang, I can candidly answer, that I have not encouraged such an idea as love towards her. Much gratitude of course I feel, for a young and very beautiful lady sacrificing many hours in cheering a lonely prisoner; but I understand that Lady Eldrida was in the habit of extending this favour to many other prisoners besides."

"True," said Calipsa, rather tartly; "but all the prisoners do not *look* admiration, nor cause unavailing sighs. Ah, you young people may scoff, when I say that I know what it is to love; ugly I now am, but once I was fresh and young. Lady Eldrida's eye is not brighter than was mine, nor her hair more glossy and black; and time, which has left indelible lines on my brow, has also imprinted a bitter lesson on my heart; and deep in its recesses, even now I feel the pang of disappointed love. I

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am wearying you: no more of this; I have come to set you free, on condition that you seek not afterwards to speak to Lady Eldrida."

"I have not the least wish to do so, only pray forget not to return her my best thanks for all her kindness to an unknown prisoner."

"Nay, nay, this will not do for me; you shall not move from hence until you have bound yourself by a solemn oath never to speak to Lady Eldrida; a few words of common-place courtesy, should you ever meet, I will exempt; but if you ever meet her purposely, if you suffer her to give you an appointment, if you have any intercourse with her, by word, or mouth, or letter, my vengeance will accompany you wherever you go, and your mother's fate will be dreadful."

Alphonzo did not take the desired oath immediately; he cross-questioned the old woman; he made her describe his mother. She did so most accurately; there was nothing wanting in the portrait; her noble bearing, her look of

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resigned sorrow, all was complete. Alphonzo, firmly believing that his fate was in the old woman's keeping, gave her the binding oath she required, pronounced the words on the crucifix she held to him, and then again Calipsa spoke.

"Here is the King's signet-ring — you will speedily gain an exit; follow this pasage—give the words, 'England and Spain;' they are the passwords this evening. Wrap your cloak around you; show not the signet-ring unless your passage is opposed. Go! why do you linger?"

"Because I have a few words to speak, which are of more importance to me than liberty itself—for what is liberty without happiness? If I could speak to Cranmer but for a few moments, I care not how soon I go."

"Did any one but you speak to me as you do," answered Calipsa, "it would not serve their turn; but you have your father's spirit, his warm heart, his commanding voice. Come,

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I will show you the way to Cranmer's cell; after to-morrow, he dies."

"Poor old man," said Alphonzo, touchingly.

"Ah! poor old man, you say now," answered Calipsa, musingly; "wait yet a few years, and, perhaps, that same voice will be heard sanctioning deeds of equal barbarity. Was I not pitying towards my fellow-creatures once? Ha! ha! and now——"

During this soliloquy, the young man and his strange conductor passed the guards; and, as the right word of pass was given, no obstacle occurred. The night guards did not know Alphonzo, and he continued unmolested, following his guide through turnings and windings, which appeared to him a perfect labyrinth.

"This is the room in which Cranmer is confined," said Calipsa; and going up to the nearest guard, she asked where she could find the turnkey?

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The man shook his head, but pointed to a small door. Calipsa opened it cautiously, and the first noise she heard was a loud snoring. "Go on sleeping, good man," thought she; "the weight of these keys fatigue you." She noiselessly passed the bed, and taking up a candle which was on the floor, she held it before a strip of wood, from which, suspended on long hooks, hung many a huge rusty key. A label was attached to each one, and when Calipsa came to the name "Cranmer," she detached the key and stole out of the room as softly as she had entered it. Alphonzo unfastened the door, and bidding Calipsa wait outside, was soon by the approaching martyr's side. Cranmer was sleeping soundly on a miserable pallet; the roof of his cell was so low that the bed was almost on the floor to prevent its touching the ceiling, which was green from damp and the hand of time. The walls had once been papered, but now hung in tattered pieces; whilst, here and there, patches were en-

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tirely torn away, and coarse snatches of songs written by profane hands substituted; and in the smallest corner of that miserable room, slept one more worthy to slumber on a downy couch than Mary, the bigotted, who reposed upon it. How unfathomable are the ways of Providence—how past finding out! It is a difficult, but very necessary, doctrine, to believe that—

"He whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth."

Although the wicked prosper awhile, the blow will eventually come to disappoint unrighteous plans. Probably Queen Mary contemplated establishing the Roman Catholic faith in England, not only intending its rituals to be observed during her reign, but hoping that, in ages to come, her established religion would be the acknowledged and only existing one throughout Europe. Many historians exculpate Mary from blame; they declare that she acted from conscientious motives, thinking her religion the best. But, may I ask, are we certain

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she did act from such motives? The Roman Catholic religion, although different in some material points from the Protestant, still has one faith, one hope, tending to the same road. Brethren and believers in Christ both sects are, hoping alike to be saved through His intercession, knowing alike that by nature we are heirs to Death, and everlasting punishment. How, then, could Mary believe she was acting in the spirit of Christianity, when the reeking blood of the innocent martyrs daily called for Heaven's vengeance? Had not that Holy One, whose life was peace, commanded Peter to return the sword in its place, and not to shed blood? And was it for His sake—was it under cover of serving the meek Prince of Peace—that relentless men sacrificed their fellow-creatures?

Again, Henry the Eighth, Mary's imperious father, had turned to the Protestant religion, in order to satisfy private feelings of revenge against the Pope and his Roman Catholic sub-

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jects; * and Mary, probably, was influenced by the same motives, when she restored the Popish forms. She disliked her sister Elizabeth—she was jealous of her superior beauty and attainments; and was it not very possible that she imagined that if once she firmly instituted the Roman Catbolic religion in England, Elizabeth would be excluded from the succession?

Although the Princess had not been formally called upon to dcclare her religious tenets, Mary could, at any time, have proved how sincerely her sister leant to the Protestant side.

Taking every view of the question, I cannot agree with those persons who exalt Mary's heinous transactions until they persuade themselves she was virtuous. But I do sincerely hope that many of her offences may be forgiven by the One who sees more into the heart at one glance than we short-sighted mortals can after the severest historical research into the

* 1546.

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character of that Queen, who, from childhood, we are taught to call "Bloody Queen Mary."

Return we now to Cranmer. Alphonzo continued some time gazing at the Prelate, as he lay passively stretched in the arms of Morpheus. He knew that every moment was precious; and still, when he would fain wake the venerable man, his hand fell powerless by his side, for he could not find courage to disturb a sleep, which buried wo in temporary oblivion. Even in repose, the integrity of mind, the bland suavity of Cranmer's temper, were drawn on the unconscious features; and Alphonzo shuddered when he contemplated the amiable slumberer, and remembered that the span of his life had nearly drawn to a close; that his days were numbered, and that man, sinful erring man, would raise his hand to strike the blow. At length the sleeper woke; the expression of listless indifference gradually subsided, and as the prelate opened his eyes he heaved a heavy sigh, a sigh of a conscious return to pain,

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and grief, and solitude. Cramner was much surprised when he saw Alphonzo standing by him. His first impulse was anger, but he looked again on the young man's pale countenance, and there he read not only sympathy towards himself, but personal suffering. Deep and earnest was their short conference; Cranmer opened the subject nearest Alphonzo's heart —he spoke of Constance, and at the sound of her name a thrill of desponding feeling ran through the father's breast, at the idea of leaving his orphan girl; no wonder, then, that he listened eagerly, when young Stracey spoke of his affection towards her; when he assured the astonished father that he loved, dearly loved, his fair daughter, but that an insurmountable obstacle must prevent their union; and that when Cranmer imagined he was pouring a tale of love into the fair girl's ears, he was arguing with her upon theological subjects, and both were vainly endeavouring to remove the bar which stood between them, for Constance was

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most strongly attached to the Protestant religion, and her lover was a Roman Catholic, although Bonner had *chosen* to doubt the strength of his principles. Poor Cranmer! he heard all, and he imagined he had discovered the mystery which hung around Mrs. Stracey; he imagined that a great part of her grief was owing to the difference between her religion and her son's. He sounded the young man's principles of conduct; there was no one in that lonely cell to bias or to advise. Cranmer knew that his daughter was too firm in her religious opinions to change her determination. He questioned the young man concerning his parentage; and when Alphonzo, in unaffected sorrow, confessed that he was as ignorant as the prelate, for a moment the latter felt staggered in his opinions, and disappointed in his hopes; but he looked up once more—he gazed earnestly at Alphonzo's handsome, noble, and intelligent countenance; he remmbereed poor Mrs. Stracey's words, "he is not the child of

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shame;" and without further hesitation, Cranmer informed the astonished Alphonzo of the Princess Elizabeth's intention of protecting his child; but fearing danger might arise during the journey, knowing no one who would escort her, he entrusted her safety to the very being from whom he had a short time ago severed her, after solemnly declaring, that relying upon Alphonzo's honour, a father's blessing, or his deepest malediction, would attend him. A few words of mutual blessing, a cordial farewell followed, and the impatient Calipsa sternly refused to wait any longer.

I do not know whether our intellects take a different turn as we draw nearer to the eternal shore—whether a belief springs into the heart, that we are inspired how to act; but, how frequently men are led, on their death-beds, to alter plans of long years' arranging, of many anxious speculations.

Had any one told Alphonzo that Cranmer intended committing Constance to his pro-

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tection, he would have laughed, and called it the silly rambling of an insane mind; but now the event appeared perfectly natural. And when Calipsa, in her dry, caustic manner, asked the young man if he were satisfied with his visit to the prelate, Alphonzo noticed not the sarcastic manner of the speaker, but quietly answered, that his visit had indeed cheered him.

Calipsa knew every turning and winding of the intricate tower. There was something very solemn in passing through the sombre building in the dark hour of night, guided only by the light of a dismal lamp. Damp and unearthly was the odour emitted by the humid air, as they continued descending; until Calipsa, with a triumphant smile, exclaimed—"Here is the mud wall again in view, and through this dungeon is an exit known to few now living."

"You appear intimately acquainted with the outlets of the Tower," said Alphonzo to his conductor, breaking a long silence.

"So are the bats," answered Calipsa; "they

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wander about as I do. When there is no one nigh to point at their ugliness, when animals of a superior creation are slumbering, then alone do the revolting creatures venture forth."

Alphonzo did not find an answer at first, for there was a degree of bitterness in the old woman's language which he could not understand. After a short pause, however, he continued—

"Why compare yourself to so loathsome an animal? The bat wanders about at night, it is true, but there is another cause beside hiding its ugliness, for the bat loves to conceal its destroying propensity, and dilapidates the treasured remains of old buildings, assisted by his companions, the mischevious owls, whilst you assist your fellow-creatures; and if you do the deed in the secret of the night, accuse your fellow-men, whose cry for vengeance and blood prevent your openly showing your goodness."

"Goodness! did you say?" almost shrieked

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Calipsa; "is there any goodness in the boa constrictor, when he looks without vengeance upon the harmless rabbit within his deadly grasp? Is he not sure, that with one distension of his enormous mouth, he can satiate his hunger?"

"I do not understand you," answered Alphonzo, slightly, but perceptibly, shuddering.

"Perhaps not," replied the old woman; "but it is my custom to speak in riddles. I bartered my happiness for riddles I have never solved; the whole world is a riddle, and we the component parts of it; go, then, and solve mine, and add this—'The boa-constrictor when confined cannot seek the harmless rabbit, but when it is brought to him he will gladly eat it;' so Calipsa will not seek Alphonzo Stracey, but should her keeper throw him into her den, she must satisfy—if not her own feelings of revenge—those of others, under whose directions she acts. Young man, now we part; though now under the damp ground, there is a

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trap-door above, which has the appearance simply of a piece of pavement, over an old spring of water. We are far from reach, and although I have this night befriended you, *beware of me in future*, for I blindly follow my chalked-out path, hired by one who stops not at any danger. Farewell." She raised the trap-door; Alphonzo with difficulty climbed up, and before he could thank the extraordinary old woman, she had already retreated, and was retracing her steps. "Ha! ha! ha! how I love this damp old place," she exclaimed, sitting down, notwithstanding the chilly air. "I am alone here, and under no one's control, and I can jeer and laugh at human nature, and I can think what fools the most cunning persons are; aye, and I can rail against Kings and Queens without the attainder of treason. Ha! ha! Philip! Didst think I could have poisoned her? Didst think I could have withstood that large blue eye, bathed in tears, and the rending appeal she made to my heart?

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Heart! have I one left? It never beats in fear, it never palpitates in pleasure; it never sinks, it never rises; and yet, perhaps, my heart is warmer than Mary's, Queen of England; and they pray for her *Christian Majesty* in the church! And where is her heart? Fathers bend their knees to her, and she bids them rise; mothers, bathed in tears, supplicate, and she spurns them, infants kiss her robes, and she turns from their innocent pleadings. But even in this world doth she receive her punishment, for all the fond hopes she entertains of having an heir to this fine country will be blighted; her husband, upon whom she dotes with blind and devoted fondness, cares not for his English bride; and there lives one, he thinks now dead, who could move him more by one tear, than the Queen with her pomp and her glory. Is Royal happiness disguised grief? Is Royal power the pleasure of ordering an execution? Are Royal passions revenge, bitterness, and jealousy? Mary, Mary, Queen of

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England, I envy not thy purple and gold; and oh! I envy not thy cankered heart. And Gardiner told me to shrine my conscience; and does he tell the Queen to do the same? What have I to do with the Queen? Perhaps more than she would like to know. Ha! ha! Mary, are we equal in any thing? Yes, in wickedness!

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CHAPTER V.

It was a calm moonlight night, in the middle of June, when a young man, mounted on a handsome charger, galloped across an open space of ground in the neighbourhood of Windsor. He cantered on; he paused not to look at the canopy of Heaven, sprinkled with the starry twinkling luminaries; he thought not of the refreshing night breezes, which gently wafted around his cheek; he thought not of the beautiful reflection of the moon's rays upon the grassy hillocks and the rising plains; but though the cavalier (whose sword hilt shone

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brightly when the wind threw back his cloak) paused not to think separately of the many attractions of the moon-tide beauty, he felt a grateful sense of the enthralling splendour of the scene. He passed Windsor Castle, that seat of princely greatness, of princely pleasures, and princely wo; there some had wept their last tears; there others had buried their last joyous laugh; comedy and tragedy were there commingled, vice and virtue there had dwelt. The horseman swept by the venerable pile, and continuing his solitary ride, the beauty of the scenery increased. Cottages of dazzling whiteness appeared on rising mounds, apparently springing from fairy wand; little pieces of water, upon whose surface the moon had cast her silvery rays, and many a star had also shed its brightness; groups of solemn-looking fir trees, tempering the lightness of the landscape; all was bewitchingly beautiful. But, alas! even in that calm spot Persecution had cast her hateful touch, perverting and corroding

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everything with her death-like embrace. Some of the sweet little English cottages were deserted; the windows were negligently open. The rose, the honeysuckle, and the sweet-briar, so thickly clustering round the porch, told only that the inhabitants of the cottages had fled. Fair hands, which were wont, year after year, to cull the blithesome flowers, where, oh, where were they? Dispersed and away, flying from a country where rivulets of human blood flowed—where the voice of humanity was drowned by the louder call of persecution. The cattle looked lean and wan, and as the horseman glided by, they languidly raised their heads, and uttered plaintive cries, as if to recall their masters home. True, they had the rich grass for their pasture; but even dumb animals love kindness; and where now was the fodder, and the soothing caresses, which their masters' hands were wont to give. And here and there a wretched-looking dog, houseless, wan, uncared for, unloved, wandered about in lean

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wretchedness; and after a feeble effort to bark at the horseman, crouched down with a piteous howl by the deserted hearth. And as the rider continued his course, another sign of the times met his gaze. Many a closed chapel, where formerly Protestant worshippers repaired, were closed, and the seal of heresy placed upon them; rising high a little further, was a Roman Catholic church in its stead; whilst towering high above all, above the houses, and the cottages, above the trees, and all other objects, was the cross, the emblem of undying faith, then, alas! used only as a cover for barbarity and wickedness.

That solitary rider, upon whom the ravages of persecution were bursting forth in unmasked robing, was Alphonzo Stracey; and he belonged to that sect who had vainly endeavoured, by violence of the most appalling kind, to stop the pure and holy Protestant faith. A secret voice told him, that ere long he should turn; that continuing still in the same essential doc-

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trine, he should believe in truth; that deeds compatible with a Christian character, not an outward *show* of religion, are required by him, who cared more for the inward repentance of the heart, than for the sacrifice of bulls and rams. But the time of his conversion was not yet; he could not give up the love of liberty and the love of life. Not yet had he seen the bright lantern to guide him through the vale of darkness; not yet had he found the refreshing fountain of life; not yet heard a voice say—

> Weary Pilgrim, come and drink,
> Let no more thy spirit sink.
> Think no more of mortal strife,
> After death—Eternal life.

At length, Alphonzo reached the end of his journey. He stopped by the side of a clustering group of trees; and looking around, he appeared to reconnoitre whether he was quite alone; and then, brushing aside with his whip the clustering branches of lilac and laburnum

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which opposed his progress, he dismounted from his horse, for fear the noise of his hoofs should disturb the fair occupier of the cottage, and leading him by the bridle, he gave a gentle knock at the door. He had to repeat it, before any notice was taken of it, and then a trembling servant opened the highest window. She shrieked when she saw the horseman, fearing Gardiner or Bonner had traced her mistress in her retreat; but, before she could close the casement, Alphonzo called to her in reassuring accents, and bade her tell her mistress, that a friend wished to speak to her. In a few moments he was ushered into a little parlour, and the servant placed lights on the table, informing him that her mistress would come down as soon as she had dressed.

During the time which necessarily elapsed, young Stracey examined the little room. He felt a pleasure in imagining how poor Constance had spent her time in her sequestered cottage. He opened several books; they all

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related to the Protestant faith; and, in fear, the young Papist closed them again. Flowers were arranged in glasses; they at least were equally open for both sects to admire, and he hastily placed a rose and a forget-me-not in his breast. Dried flowers placed in leaves, arranged for the purpose, next claimed Alphonzo's attention; under each leaf an appropriate motto was written, and as he turned over the pages the lines under a rose attracted his attention—

"When crushed by a summer's shower,
The rose loses her bloom,
Some kind hand oft will save the flower
From a watery tomb.
Alphonzo, if I were thine,
My sighs I'd cease to breathe;
But till thou hear'st the Truth Divine,
My hand I cannot give."

The book fell from Alphonzo's hand. "Alas! I can save the rose, and can restore her to a place of safety," he thought; "but when she blooms again in her renewed loveliness, her freshness will he bestowed on some one else.

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"Constance, I cannot believe thy religion the best, although thy purity is angelic; still there is a want of ardour in the form of thy Protestant rituals. Where the mystic signs, and the holy sprinkling of water, and the confessional disburdening of the soul, when, albeit we are talking to sinful man, we are secretly communing with God?" Lost in such reflections as these, the moments quickly fled, and long before the mental strife which those inward arguments produced was over, the door opened, and Constance had smiled upon Alphonzo, and fearlessly placed her small hand in his. There was something too imposing in the young girl's appearance, to allow frivolous ideas to give themselves utterance in conversation. She was one of those rare instances of a gifted mind using its best energies for her Maker's service, not giving negligently its overplus. Although very young, and fair—almost too fragile for human frame to be moulded in—still there was a firm determina-

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tion painted on the intellectual brow which baffles description; and when those liquid blue eyes, shaded with the most exquisite light tresses, were raised, they gave her whole expression in one glance! and that expression was so pure, so free from personal vanity, that it chased away all idea on the beholder's part of praising one who appeared far above the vulgar voice of personal admiration. Many tears besprinkled the fair girl's cheeks, as she listened to the conversation Alphonzo had had with her father; and when she heard of her approaching interview with the Princess Elizabeth, she exclaimed, in all the fervour of youth, "Oh! how I will beg her Highness to use her power with her Royal sister to obtain my father's pardon. Oh, that men would not be so cruel! Poor old man! his gray locks ought to plead his cause; but Alphonzo, you shake your head, and think my father obstinate. He once recanted, and the very fever of remorse he felt in consequence, shows powerfully how much he was

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in the wrong. Oft-times in the dark midnight hour, will my father's image appear before me; for, although only lately united again, I warmly feel the parental tie. Oft-times I shall fancy, I see his frame writhing under the torments of the flame; but nevertheless, it would not be possible for me to esteem him if he recanted. Alphonzo, mine is not a wavering faith, founded on the bent to which my childish heart was directed. I have studied the divine truths in which I believe; I have well examined the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant faith, and I cannot waver. Would that you thought as I do! Maiden modesty vanishes before this important point, and I most solemnly promise, what our hearts both wish, that I will be your affianced bride the moment you renounce that faith, which is void of humility and human charity. The blood of my father calls for vengeance, and I cannot unite myself to one who follows his enemies' creed. Think me not forward if I have thus

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commenced a conversation without encouragement from you; but, Alphonzo, I am not situated as are other girls of my age, and it behoves me to take care of myself. The friend of my infancy has left me—at least I am informed that some mystery I cannot solve must now part us. My venerable father dares not openly protect me; even if he does not suffer the horrible stake, where then am I to turn for comfort? Where, but in my own principles, and my own heart? One severe pang is better than a protracted uncertainty. Answer me, therefore, friend of my childhood, companion of my early days; answer me now, in the same spirit of truth in which we used to converse under Italia's balmy sky; answer, above all, as if you were responsible not to a weak, silly girl, but to an all-seeing God."

The simple, yet searching appeal, struck deep into Alphonzo's sensitive heart; every chord vibrated with admiration, every pulse beat quickly in his breast. More binding than the strongest

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oaths, more sacred than the eyesight of a hundred witnesses, appeared to him that slight girl's words, whose fate, though he knew not how much of her happiness, depended on his answer.

"You hesitate," replied Constance, withdrawing Alphonzo's hands gently from his face; "you cannot look up, you dare not contemplate my unhappiness. But, Alphonzo, fear not; I am a lenient judge. I should despise any person who could throw off his religion, as an old for a new garment. Watch the seasons—how gradual the opening of the tiny bud; watch creation—how graduating the scale of human growth; watch the passions—how very slow the path to sure happiness. And thus it is with your heart, Alphonzo; gradual will be the workings of your feelings, and yet, methinks they have already changed."

"They have changed," answered Alphonzo, fervently; "they are lost in one absorbing principle of admiration; they are centred wholly on one point—that of gaining your love. Yes,

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friend of my childhood—for no one can take that title from us—companion of my early rambles—well do I remember when first we prattled together in infantine glee. Since then, our hearts have altered on one essential point, but still, in affection, together they are both united. I will then examine this faith which can calm every feeling of your heart, which can make you tranquil in alarm, and resigned e'en if death should stretch forth his pale hands to grasp you. I will not hover around your path; I will not be influenced in my determination by the beauty of your face, or the grace of your deportment; I will not let any earthly claim bias me in this great work; but listen to me, Constance, for this may be for many long months our last interview: if I turn to your faith, if I brave danger, if I embrace your religion, no place shall separate me from you; no argument, no power shall estrange us; my fate must be yours, my home yours; if you suffer for re-

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ligion, encouraged by your example, so will I if this persecution ceases, and we can worship in peace; then our prayers will mingle together. Constance, you may trust me; although my love for you is strong, I forget it in the one wish of serving and pleasing you; and during our journey to Woodstock, no words of mine shall cause you uneasiness."

Alphonzo pressed the young girl's hand within his own, and was astonished to find how violently she trembled; perhaps he knew not how woman, when warmly attached to the religion in which she has been trained, can sacrifice her dearest hope, if it stands against her faith.

When Constance returned, she was equipped in a riding habit, which displayed her well-turned figure to great advantage, and her glossy light hair hung gracefully round her pretty face; the words of admiration which arose to Alphonzo's lips he instantly checked, for he remembered his promise, and they determined as it were mutually to cast away all

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light thoughts, and to devote the whole journey to theological conversation; and thus the youthful pair spent many hours, until, after resting several times, their journey was drawing to a close; then Constance began to feel the bashfulness of her situation, and, to make anxious enquiries about the Princess Elizabeth. Alphonzo had seen her when she was almost a prisoner in the Tower; when Courtney, afterwards Earl of Devonshire, refusing to pay his addresses to Mary, incurred her displeasure by his devoted attentions towards the Princess, her sister.

"But do you think I shall love the Princess?" said Constance.

"You will both love and fear her; there is something very commanding in her manners, but she is kind and affable, unless her proud nature has been stung by some ungracious or unjust action towards herself; towards the Queen, the Princess bears herself haughtily, but, alas! she has too much reason so to do."

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Thus prepared to find the Princess of a wavering disposition, Constance was almost afraid of meeting a cold reception. If any event during the day had displeased Elizabeth, she knew not that the Princess could so perfectly command her temper; that it was not until many years afterwards that her disposition became passionate, when her power, necessarily left her sole mistress of her actions. Elizabeth then often repented, too late, of deeds which were past recalling, and thus became fretful and passionate. Alphonzo had rightly said that the Princess was haughty; but where her heart was touched, no signs of *hauteur* could be discovered, and she received Constance with the most affectionate solicitude. Nevertheless, she could not understand how Mrs. Stracey's son had escorted her *protégé;* she felt inclined to question the servant who had accompanied Constance, but her pride restrained. She, however, treated the young man coldly, and he had left the mansion when

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Constance next inquired for him, leaving her a few lines, to tell her that their compact was binding, and that in a few months she should see him again. As Constance thought how lonely she should feel without one human being, save her maid, to remind her of her earlier days, she vainly repressed her tears, and at length sobbed aloud; and although Elizabeth endeavoured to assuage her grief by every affectionate caress she could bestow, the young girl reflected with bitterness that her father's death would seal this new tie; she could not repress the emotion which stole over her, but throwing herself on her knees before Elizabeth, she exclaimed, "Save him, oh save my father?"

"My power is very limited, Constance, and I have done all I possibly can; but I fear me that amounts to little."

"God will reward you for your kindness, lady; but these fanatics——"

"Hush, hush; you must be cautious—indeed you must."

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"That is a difficult thing to learn; but your Highness knows that God loves the truth."

"Ay, that is true, but you are young and beautiful; and, remember, that one word spoken against those persons you are now calling fanatics, might cost you your life."

"Ah, lady, if I could suffer instead of my father, willingly would I give my life; for this world is but a thing of naught, and we live as it were in a dream, awakening only at the threshold of death. My path through life has scarcely yet begun, but whether I tread the fragrant lane of thornless roses or the chequered vale of brambles and thorns, each coming morn will usher one image before me—namely my dying father's phantom spirit."

"Constance, dear Constance, you make me shudder; come, seek some repose, and your mind will be easier."

Constance complied, with a thankful smile, for she was very weary.

Woodstock is sixty miles west-north-west of

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London, and eight miles north of Oxford. It is pleasantly situated on a rising ground, and a clear rivulet flows through the plains around.

The journey from London had been slow and tedious; for though, thanks to steam, we now perform our flying expeditions with magic speed, in the days of Queen Mary it was very different. No wonder, then, that the fair Constance eagerly courted repose; and the Princess, after seeing her charge asleep, walked alone on the terrace which surrounded the west side of her mansion. Bitter, many of her thoughts undoubtedly were, but through the darkened canvass glimmered a bright picture, for the Princess felt she had done all in her power to save Cranmer. She had sent a message to Philip of Spain; she had bowed her haughty spirit—she had sued a favour, and Philip had had an interview with the Princess, during which, though both often fell into bitter expressions, still Elizabeth had gained her point.

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"You surprise me," said the King, when he had silently heard the object of the Princess's note. "I imagined your Highness had some mighty plan in your head to consult me upon. And has my long journey amounted to a mere nothing?"

"Nothing, do you call it, Sire, when you can save a fellow-creature's life?"

"The obstinate old fool," replied Philip; "by one word of recantation, he could live, without giving me or any one else any further trouble."

"Ah, Sire, talk not thus. Is religion, then, of no weight, can we vascillatingly change from one sect to another? Albeit the good old man clings to life, he dreads death less than to deny that faith which has borne him through the trials of life, guided his youth, supported his manhood, and now comforts his sinking heart."

"Very eloquent, indeed," coldly answered Philip; "but I cannot see what great harm it can do your favourite to change his religion."

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"Hush, hush," said Elizabeth, rising indignantly; remember, King of Spain, you are talking to Henry the Eighth's daughter; and although I am of no consequence at Court—although I have no influence, no power—still I am so far mistress of my own actions, that I brook not insult—no, not even from Philip of Spain. Your, levity, Sire, not only marks disrespect towards an English Princess, but it also plainly shows that Philip of Spain is King by birth, but that his heart is not equal to his high rank."

"Well, Princess, you have not been spending your leisure hours in learning to flatter, that is very certain. Pray do not leave me in anger, and accuse my education, not my heart, if I have been trained in less mental gravity with yourself. Now, what can you reasonably expect me to do?"

The Princess paused; her pride was hurt; and had she followed the bent of her inclination, she would have left the room; but the

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prelate's pale face appeared to upbraid her for her weakness, and she once more took a seat opposite the King of Spain. She placed her hand on his, and with an open expression of countenance, she continued the conversation.

"Philip of Spain, have you spoken idle words, when you have so often assured me that your relationship to me was pleasing in your sight? that you would never allow me to be Mary's slave? that——"

"Enough, Princess; order, and you shall be obeyed. And in return, look not so proudly upon me; we are equally proud, and although high in station, we are, methinks, equally unhappy. Princess, I will do your bidding, and I will save the prelate's life."

"Now, indeed, I have gained a grand and heartfelt pleasure in this interview," said Elizabeth.

"Well then, Princess, I must place a condition on my intercession with the Queen; I must beg your Highness to endeavour to submit

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to your Royal sister, and in peace and unity to adorn our Court by your bright presence."

Elizabeth had not expected this burst of gallantry, and an arch smile accompanied her answer.

"Mary is my Queen, and she is your wife; therefore I will refrain from speaking of her."

"*Toi de roi*," replied the King, equally archly; "if you are only afraid of speaking your mind of the Queen because she is my wife, fear not, Princess; my conjugal nerves can bear it."

Elizabeth burst into a hearty fit of laughter, in which the King involuntarily joined; and when he took his departure he again promised instant compliance with the Princess's request, thinking at the same time that Elizabeth was more bewitchingly persevering in her will, more enchanting, and more witty, every time he saw her. The Princess, however, was far from feeling the momentary mirth in which she indulged; but she was so well acquainted with

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the bent of Philip's mind, she knew so well when to plead in a jocose or a serious manner, that studying thus her part, she generally gained her point. The Princess Elizabeth's tutor, Roger Ascham, had wisely trained her mind to bear with equanamity the revolutions of pleasure and pain. She studied not the Roman and Greek languages; she read not Plato, for the sake of boasting of her love of abstruse learning, but she gleaned crops of useful knowledge from every page, and stocked with unsparing abundance her mental store-house. Elizabeth thus learned that first and essential rule to clever judgment. She said everything in its proper place, and she gave her advice at the seasonable moment when the person to whom it was given, would receive it. And, although she was sorry to hear Constance continue her lamentations when she awoke, still the Princess feared to tell her all she hoped, lest a disappointment of some kind should occur.

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CHAPTER VI.

It will not be ill placed here, to give a short biographical account of Cranmer and other martyrs in the Protestant cause. Cranmer's general character is given in these words: "He was mild and indulgent in his judgment of his fellow-creatures, severe towards himself, charitable towards others." Yet his manners were extremely conciliating; he lived in that age when no restraint was placed upon any action which sprung from religious motives; and following this sad example, in the reign of Edward the Sixth he caused a Kentish lady to be put to

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death. Painful is it when we read the biography of an illustrious person, and find the pages sullied with one spot, which time and all the leniency of biographers cannot efface. How often, too, the very fault which mars the bright page of a great man's career, is the very one by which he suffers afterwards, as exercised towards himself. Cranmer, then, in the height of his power, did not contemplate a death similar to the Kentish lady who suffered by his orders. The prelate was born in Nottinghamshire, and at the time of his death was in his sixtieth year. When the persecution began in Mary's reign, Cranmer was not called upon to recant; he was to see others suffer before him as a type of what he would afterwards endure. In vain Pole pleaded; in vain he told Mary that the Emperor recommended her to be more lenient towards the Protestants; nothing save their blood could satisfy Gardiner, and his arguments were more agreeable to the cruel bigotry of Mary and Philip.

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England was soon a scene of undisguised horrors; and under cover of the mantle of religion, cruelty of the most refined nature was practised. The first person who suffered was Rogers, prebendary of St. Paul's, a man eminent in his party for virtue and learning. Gardiner was disappointed in his hopes of intimidating him, and vainly strove to make him the first example of recantation. Rogers had a beloved wife and ten children, but he parted from them with calm resignation, hoping to meet them again on the eternal shore, where peace and happiness reign. When his last moments drew near, Rogers desired to see his wife, but Gardiner, joining insult to cruelty, told him that as he was a priest he could not have a wife.

Hooper, bishop of Glocester, was executed at his own diocese; but whilst the circumstance was intended to strike terror amongst his flock, the manner in which he cheerfully gave up his life served only to impress on the beholders' minds the strength of that religion which could

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thus calm the parting soul, on the verge of Eternity. Hooper suffered the most intense agony. The wind being high, blew the flame of the faggots around his body. Part of his body was consumed before his vitals were attacked. One of his hands dropped off, with the other he contined beating his breast. He was heard to pray and exhort the people until his tongue, swollen with the violence of his agony, could no longer permit him utterance. He was three quarters of an hour in excruciating torture, whilst Mary's pardon in case he recanted was all the while placed before his eyes.

Sanders suffered at Coventry: a pardon was also offered to him on the usual conditions of recantation; but rejecting it, he embraced the fatal stake, saying, "Welcome, the cross of Christ; welcome, everlasting life."

Taylor, minister of Hadley, was also executed at the same place amidst all his congregation and personal friends. When tied to the stake, he repeated a psalm in English; one of

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his guards struck him on the mouth, and bade him speak Latin; another struck him so violent a blow on the head with his halbert, that his torments ceased in death.

Philpot, archdeacon of Winchester, having engaged in a dispute with an Indian, and such being his zeal for orthodoxy, that forgetting all rules of propriety, both of conduct and manners he spat in his adversary's face; he afterwards wrote a treatise to justify this action, and declared he had been led to the deed to signify how unworthy was such a miscreant of being admitted into the society of any Christian. Philpot was a Protestant, and falling now into the hands of people as jealous as himself, but more powerful, he was condemned to death, and suffered at Smithfield.

Ferrar, bishop of St. David's, was burned in his diocese, and his appeal to Cardinal Pole was disregarded.

Ridley, bishop of London, and Latimer, formerly bishop of Worcester, two prelates cele-

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brated for learning and virtue, perished together at Oxford. Latimer, when tied to the stake, supported his brother bishop's constancy saying, "Be of good cheer brother, we shall this day kindle such a torch in England, as I trust in God, shall never be extinguished." The executioners had tied bags of gunpowder about the prelates, in order to put a speedy period to their tortures; and this merciful invention immediately killed Latimer, who was in extreme old age; Ridley continued for some time after, alive in the midst of the flames.

Hunter, a young man nineteen years of age, having been seduced into a dispute by a priest, had unwarily denied the real Presence. Sensible of his danger, he immediately absconded, and Bonner, more cruel than Gardiner, more relentless, more remorseless, laid hold of Hunter's father, and threatened him with the greatest severities, if he did not produce the young man to stand his trial. Hunter, hearing his father's uncomfortable situation, voluntarily

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surrendered to Bonner, and that persecuting prelate condemned him to the flames. Thomas Haukes, another martyr, wishing even in his last moments to prevent the Protestants recanting, agreed with them, that should he find the torture tolerable, he would make them a signal to that purpose in the midst of the flames. Supported by his devoted zeal, he suffered with constancy, stretched out his arms as a signal agreed on, and in that posture he expired.

The female sex produced many examples of inflexible courage; some were tortured, some were condemned to the flames, and even children laid down their young lives for the sake of the religion they had embraced.

Persons condemned to death were not convicted of teaching, or dogmatizing contrary to the established religion; they were merely seized on suspicion, and, refusing to subscribe to articles offered them, they were instantly committed to the flames. To exterminate the

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whole Protestant party was impossible, and every new martyr brought another stanch adherent to the faith, which inspires men with so much hope and courage.

The Spanish Government became each day more odious, and Philip endeavoured to remove the reproach cast upon him, by a very gross artifice. He ordered his confessor to deliver in his presence a sermon in favour of toleration, a doctrine somewhat extraordinary in the mouth of a Spanish friar. This step, however, was of no avail; Bonner, although shameless and savage, found it impossible to bear the whole blame of the dreadful persecutions, and cautiously throwing off the mask, the relentless tempers of the Queen and the King of Spain appeared without disguise. A bold step was taken to introduce the inquisition in England. The Queen, in imitation of it, named a commission of twenty one persons, armed with the power of searching out heretics, by every political, or artificial, or cunning man-

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ner imaginable; they were to arrest the bringers in, the sellers, and readers of all heretical books. They were to examine, and punish, all misbehaviours or negligences, in any church or chapel; and to try all priests who did not preach the sacrament at the altar; all persons who did not attend mass in their own parish church; who refused to go in processions, or did not take holy bread or holy water. They might search premises, break into the domestic circle of peace, and tear away, without any further notice, any who refused to give up their Protestant documents. Letters were even written to Lord North, and others, ordering them to put to the torture any persons who would not confess.*

With so many secret agents in every parish to execute the Queen's will, executions were very numerous; and although for a time some persons congratulated themselves on having escaped the notice of the inquisitorial parties, they were soon fatally undeceived. "The com-

* See Hume, Fox, Burnet, Strype, &c.

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mon net at that time," says Sir Richard Baker, "for catching Protestants, was the real Presence, and that net was used to catch the Lady Elizabeth. For being asked one time, what she thought of the words of Christ, '*This is my body*,' whether she thought it the true body of Christ that was in the sacrament? it is said, that after a pause, she answered:

"Christ was the word that spake it;
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the word did make it
That I believe, and take it."

If Elizabeth did not make use of these ambigious words, which are supposed to have caused her to escape the snare laid for her, it is certain that it required all her presence of mind to free herself from the machinations of Gardiner and Bonner, who regarded her with a jealous eye; fearing that if Mary died without a successor, the Princess Elizabeth would justly punish all those now concerned in the bloody persecution.

The year 1555 had been marked by the exe-

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cutions mentioned in the beginning of this chapter; and the year 1556 witnessed another act of barbarity in the execution of the venerable Cranmer. This prelate's services towards the Queen had been great, during the reign of Henry the Eighth, and he had employed his power in mitigating the prejudices which that monarch had formed against his daughter; but the active part he had taken in obtaining the mother's choice, as well as in conducting the information, inspired Mary with hatred towards him. The Primate, therefore, had reason to expect little favour from her; but it was his own indiscreet zeal that brought on him the beginning of his persecution. We must, to explain this, look back in history to the year 1553, when a report was spread that Cranmer, in order to make his court with his Queen, had promised to officiate in the Latin service. The prelate, to wipe off this aspersion, drew up a manifesto in his defence. Among other aspersions, he said: "that as the devil was a liar

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from the beginning, and the father of lies, so had he at this time stirred up his servants to persecute Christ and his true religion. That the infernal spirit now endeavoured to restore the Latin satisfactory masses, a thing of his own invention and device. And in order to effectuate his purpose, had falsely made use of Cranmer's name and authority. And that the mass is not only without foundation, either in the Scriptures or the Primitive Church, but likewise discovers a plain contradiction to antiquity and the inspired writings; and is, besides, replete with many horrid blasphemies." *

On the publication of this exciting document, Cranmer was imprisoned and tried for high treason, the part he had taken in bringing the Lady Jane Grey to the throne being alleged against him. The execution of the sentence pronounced against him was not enforced, and

* Hume corroborates this extraordinary manifesto, by authentic testimonies—Fox, Heylin, Godwin, Burnet, Cranmer's Memoirs, page 305.

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Cranmer's life was spared until the year 1556, when the Queen was determined to satisfy her revenge, and punish him, not for high treason, but for heresy. He was cited by the Pope to stand his trial at Rome. Although he was kept in close custody at Oxford, he was, upon his not appearing, condemned as contumacious. Bonner and Thirleby exulted over the fallen prelate with fiendish delight. But the Queen was not satisfied; to triumph fully over her enemy, she wished him to sign a recantation in the theological conversations. She well knew the prelate was ever prepared with a ready answer; but Gardiner and Bonner, following the instructions they received, spoke to him in glowing colours of the ornament he would be to the Popish Church; they clad life in its most attractive garb, and Cranmer, overcome by the love of life, terrified at the thought of the tortures which awaited him, agreed to subscribe the doctrines of the Papal Supremacy and the real Presence. The Court, not only

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cruel, but perfidious, determined that this recantation should be of no avail, and they sent orders that he should be required to acknowledge his errors in church, before all the people. Whether Cranmer had received a secret intimation of these designs of causing him to be executed equally for high treason, or whether he repented of his momentary weakness, he surprised the audience by a contrary declaration, and his fate was then sealed. The last morning dawned, and Cranmer bade farewell to hope. There, in the solitary walls of his close imprisonment, he severely accused himself for having, in an unguarded moment of weakness, consented to make an insincere declaration of the Roman Catholic faith. Having fervently prayed for pardon, the prelate rose from his knees with a resigned expression of countenance, which forsook him not during the writhing tortures he suffered. He raised his meek eyes to Heaven, and breathed a prayer for his lovely child, for the Princess Elizabeth,

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and for all his unhappy countrymen; and after mentally bidding farewell to each loved person, and each spot endeared by recollections of the past, Cranmer folded his arms on his breast and awaited his doom. Ten minutes more elapsed—moments which appeared as long hours—and he was then hurried to an open space of ground, where the ominous stake, and all its fearful appendage, were awaiting their victim. A deep bell tolled solemnly, and at its knell, a concourse of some thousands hurried to the spot, to witness the last moments of a candid, sincere, and beneficent prelate, possessed of virtues eminently calculated to render him useful and amiable in society. The old man advanced with firm steps towards the pile. Gardiner was standing beside it, arrayed in a long canonical flowing robe, holding a silver crucifix in the one hand, and a vase of the same metal, containing holy water, in the other. Bonner, looking triumphant, but striving to disguise it, held a scroll of parchment and a pen. Both the pre-

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lates advanced towards their victim, and a thrill of anxious expectation ran through the crowd. "Sign this paper, kiss this cross, dip your finger in the holy water, and your soul will be saved."

Cranmer answered not a syllable, but turned from his wily tormentors with a look of unutterable disgust. And looking at the dense mob around him, the venerable Prelate addressed his last words to his countrymen:—

"Brethren, and fellow pilgrims on earth, be warned by my last voice; witness how a Christian can die. Shake off the shackle which binds your soul; hold not the same faith as men who depart from every law of equity and humanity. What is life? E'en at the best, the retrospect has more pain than pleasure; life is a vale of tears, an echoing of farewell. The God who breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, that God who made him an accountable creature, who blessed him with a soul, capable of the most refined feelings; that God, and he alone, should recall the life

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he gives. It is not His spirit, then, which influences bad men to this barbarous persecution; the spirit of departed martyrs, of Latimer, of Rogers, and of many more, all loudly call for vengeance. Raise not your voices, my friends; vengeance will come, but it is not yet time. Let me suffer; I desire it: and this hand, this weak member of a faulty body, shall be held in the flames until every sinew shrinks. Ah, shed your tears; they will pray for my forgiveness. Pray on, pray on, for my soul, on the verge of eternity, is bewildered and lost, amidst thoughts of the wondrous things passing man's understanding, which I shall soon see. My sight is dazzled, and my voice trembles. No friends of early life can I distinguish amidst yon dense crowd; and yet, methinks, that each heart palpitates in grief, in alarm, and in sympathy. As long as this earth lasts, man's heart, corrupt and fallen, knows not what new wickedness to work. Since the blood of righteous Abel stained the

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earth, like blood-hounds after their prey, men scent out new objects of revenge. Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose blood gushed to the altar's precincts, since canonized and worshiped, does he now look down! Did he see through the lapse of years, and did he know that Cranmer, holding his archbishopric, would suffer worse torments than he did. My blood, like his, will not be shown to the anxious.* But, countrymen, hear me, my spirit shall——"

"Come, cease this noise," coarsely exclaimed Bonner, perceiving the populace were deeply touched; "we seek not to send your soul to torments worse than those awaiting you; recant from your heresy, and let your soul live."

Welcome death; away with recantation! away with detestable perjury!" answered Cranmer."

Far is it from my pen to trace the horror of the scene which followed. The hangman's knot is a brief mode of death; the block is a quick

* It is pretended that Becket's blood is still to be seen marking the spot where he was slain.

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transit from wo; the guillotine, so called from Dr. Guillotine, a Frenchman of mild and quiet habits, who invented the machine, as a means of quickly relieving the suffering criminal from his pain (little thinking that the Republicans would make it reek with innocent blood); this, and all other modes of death, are light in comparison to the dreadful sufferings endured at the stake. A simple piece of burning sealing-wax, a drop of scalding water, will cause the most acute pain. What then must be the agony, when limb after limb is destroyed by the fiery element? when the excitement, before the operation begins, strengthens the nerves, and the wind sometimes dispersing the flames, gives a short respite from death? and the vital spark of life *will* linger, even when the body is a wretched mass of black, falling substance.

No words were uttered in that dense crowd. The sufferings of Cranmer were dreadful; a few stifled groans burst from him, growing fainter and fainter, lost in the noise of the hideous

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cracking of the bones, as they were severed by the dreadful flames. At last the scene was drawing to a close; the fire more brightly shone, then embered slowly away. Thank God! the breath of life had departed; the vital tenure of existence had just fled; the last remains of Cranmer's body fell with a crash to the ground; the stake in flames, mingled with the dust, when suddenly tearing over the ground, covered with dense clouds of dust, an object, at first indistinct, attracted the attention of the spectators; nearer and nearer it approached, and a horseman was seen spurring the flanks of his reeking courser, whose sides were pierced, and marked the dust which its speed raised. As the horseman drew near, the crowd spontaneously made room for him; but when he cast his eyes on the expiring embers, a mist came over him, and he paused; the instant his faithful charger left off its hurried course, he bowed his head, the flowing mane became perfectly rigid, the limbs bent, and he expired. The

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nearest bystander assisted the almost fainting cavalier to dismount.

"Ah, poor beast! poor beast!" exclaimed the rider, "I might have spared they bleeding sides, for we are too late; not one vestige is left of the venerable prelate. The dust of his body, and the embers of the faggots commingle. A few moments more speed, and had I expired with exhaustion, my friends, I would have saved Cranmer. This paper," he continued, unfolding a parchment, "contains her Gracious Majesty's pardon, at the intercession of her husband, Philip of Spain. All of ye be witnesses that I have discharged my duty. My Lords Gardiner and Bonner, ye will repent if ye have been over hasty."

"Who art thou, daring intruder, to talk thus?" said Bonner, making his way through the crowd. He pushed aside the high collar of the cavalier's cloak, and then exclaimed, in some amazement—"By my faith, it is young Stracey, and I arrest thee as an unknown in-

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truder on the popular tranquillity of the realm, and retain thee as a prisoner unlawfully escaped from the Tower. Guards, arrest your prisoner!"

No one moved; the appalling scene just witnessed, the faintness which overspread Alphonzo's fine features, from exhaustion, the Queen's signature on the parchment, all had their weight with the guards who were stationed round the stake.

Bonner, perceiving their thoughts, tore the parchment from Alphonzo's hands, and, throwing it on the embers, a flame immediately rekindled, and one of the bystanders approaching, rescued the prelate's heart from amidst the flames.* The action was not unobserved, and the guards, feeling by Bonner's deed how powerful that vindictive prelate was, reluctantly seized Alphonzo, who was again conducted as a prisoner to the Tower.

* It is pretended, that after Cranmer's body was consumed, his heart was found entire amidst the ashes—an event which the Protestants considered as an emblem of his constancy.

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CHAPTER VII.

VERY different were Alphonzo's feelings when he found himself once more a prisoner in the Tower. This time he was confined in a damp and uncomfortable cell; a wretched pallet was his only bed, and coarse food his fare. No voice came near the prisoner to cheer his captivity—the Lady Eldrida's dark eyes rested not on his face. That she still loved Alphonzo with the warmth her fervent nature was capable of feeling, was true; but it required only a trifle with her Spanish heart to mix resentment with love. Although the latter was not les-

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sened, Calipsa artfully insinuated that Alphonzo ought not to have left the Tower without risking any danger to see his kind advocate.

At first Eldrida scarcely heeded the insinuation, but as day after day passed, no message, no note, arrived, when she vainly endeavoured to conquer a passion equally hopeless and warm; then anger took hold of Eldrida's heart, and she daily grew more moody. Philip of Spain noticed her dejection, but, knowing the cause, he left it to time to cure the wound. The Queen was so absorbed with the persecution which was immediately under her command, that she saw Eldrida only in those gay moments when a Court wears, as it were, a veil, when every face is smiling; when sighs and tears are hidden; when each person vies with his neighbour to be light and gay. A wonderful change, however, had passed over the young girl's heart. It is truly astonishing how small a weight will overbalance whatever is good in our nature. Carefully as Eldrida concealed her

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grief, striving, as she did, to keep it within her breast, and "let the canker-worm prey upon her damask cheek:" it was useless; the bud was blighted; and an attentive observer could easily trace hidden grief in that heavy eye, and that cold, unchanging expression, which replaced youth's smiling beams. In those days of violence and bloodshed, the greatest secresy prevailed through Court actions. Who thought of inquiring openly into Bonner's secrets? Who asked him where he went? Who inquired why a scowl sat on his countenance? Who wondered when a smile of scorn or displeasure stole over his lips? Who asked how many persons, or what the name was of any particular individual confined in the Tower? No one: secret as the inquisitorial tribunal in Spain were the actions of that prelate, so detestable to the whole nation. Ah, how would Bonner rest at night, when he reflected of the transactions of each day; when, before going to rest, he had each time to wash his hands from some

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innocent person's blood? Did not their shrieks sound in his ears? Did not their voices call for vengeance? Did not their ghosts hover around him in phantom mockery, calling for vengeance? Bonner had steeled heart; he had bid his conscience be still; he persuaded himself he was following the right path; he accused the heretics of obstinacy, himself of firmness and courage; and daily a new victim was secreted in the Tower, and speedily replaced by another person when death made room for the next martyr. Secretly as Bonner acted, there was one person who watched his actions, for motives better known to herself than any one else; this person was Calipsa. Circumstances had made her cruel; one step in wickedness had rendered her heartless; but hers was the heartlessness of a despairing spirit, of one who knew not where to turn for advice and consolation; no feelings of personal revenge lurked in her heart. But such was her love and obedience towards Philip of Spain, that, had he commanded her to cut off

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her right hand and bring it to him, she would have unhesitatingly complied with the request. Poor soul! she sinned for her Royal master, and doubly sinful in the sight of Heaven, must have been that heart, who, knowing her weakness, bade her sin.

Secretly as Bonner intended concealing Alphonzo, Calipsa had spies the prelate thought not of; and the old woman lost no time in apprizing the King of young Stracey's detention. Bonner had been closeted with Philip during a great part of the day; then voices were heard in the rooms around—they were apparently conversing angrily together, and Philip was evidently in a towering passion. At last the prelate left, and Calipsa arranged with the King that he should visit the captive Alphonzo as soon as it was evening. When the hour arrived, and the King glided noiselessly through the secret passages in the Tower, a bitter smile crossed his features, when he reflected that he, the powerful King of Spain—he, the King-con-

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sort of England—he, whose vast dominions stretched from north to south, and east to west, thus sought the evening hour to avoid the attention of Bonner—a menial, subject, risen at the expense of blood, treachery, and cruelty of the most refined kind. The King had bidden the gaoler to follow him; and when Calipsa at length told him that they had arrived at the end of their journey, he commanded the man to open the door.

The gaoler turned very pale.

"How now, sirrah! dost hear me?" said Philip.

"Ah, your Malesty, preserve me from my Lord Gardiner; he bade me refuse to open that cell, even, if—if your Majesty commanded it."

"Give me the key directly," said Philip, in a thundering voice, echoed far in the lofty corridors around.

The man complied; and Philip, repenting his momentary passion, assured the gaoler that he had nothing to fear. Calipsa waited outside

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the dungeon, and Philip, taking the lamp from her hands, was soon by Alphonzo's pallet. The young man had just fallen into a restless sleep, and as he tossed about on his hard couch, he was wandering in dreams of early childhood. Cranmer's daughter was near him; now he fancied that summer tints were blooming around him, and that he was by Albano's still waters; he heard the gentle ripple of the lake, and the murmuring song of the birds around; he was sitting, in imagination, on the verdant turf, shaded by the spreading trees; and Constance, young, smiling, trusting, and happy, she was by his side.

The dream changed, and the sleeper fancied he was spending a few months in exploring the beauties of that country where his youth had been spent. He stood by the Lago Maggiore, he saw the lovely Arona; and speeding on from Laveno and the Bensca Hill, next Lake Verbanus appeared. Complete was the infatuation of the dream: the lake, the land, the mountains,

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and the vale; and afar, the Alps reared their white-capped heads; and many a floating bark gracefully wended its way down the stream; and the sun was gilding its surface with its brightest tints: there was music on the earth, and gladness in the air, and the isles around echoed to the voice of mirth. Complete was the deceiving dream; and then the sleeper awoke, not to find himself under Albano's sunny sky, but in a damp and sickly-feeling dungeon.

The sensation of waking from a pleasingly deceptive dream, to the sad reality of sorrow and pain, has often been delineated by able writers, and does not want more description; for those who have felt the acute pain of this feeling would not esteem a repeated description of it; and to those fortunate persons who wake only to pleasure and enjoyment, to them I say, "ye are blessed."

When Alphonzo beheld the King of Spain, he could not recall the circumstance of his imprisonment; nor did he awaken from the sort

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of trance in which he had fallen, until he found himself in a spacious and well-furnished room leading to the King's bed-chamber. Anything approaching to grandeur stole with a pleasant feeling over the senses, for buildings and household furniture were very rude in those days. Hume quotes from Nicholson's Historical Library, where he affirms that a Comptroller of Edward the Sixth's household, paid only thirty shillings a year of our present money for his house in Channel Row.

Alphonzo, however, had dwelt in that land where luxury and pomp were far before-hand with our English isle; and he felt himself again in his own natural position, away from the narrow dungeon, where useless sighs were wafted, and scalding tears flowed in vain.

"You were too late to save the prelate," exclaimed the King, after desiring Alphonzo to sit opposite to him; "and when you found that was the case, where was the use of naming me, or reading the pardon aloud? I had not

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yet convinced the Queen of the good, probable to arise, by showing clemency to Cranmer; and it is possible, that I should never have convinced her Majesty on the point. I had, however, my own plan on the subject, and now you have frustrated it by naming me as accessory to Cranmer's pardon. Full two hours have I argued with Bonner, and have at length convinced him it is all a mistake; that I have nothing to do with the document he destroyed."

"What!" exclaimed Alphonzo, indignantly; "has your Majesty really denied giving me that paper, and making the venerable Cranmer's pardon the condition for my entering your Majesty's Spanish service, and engaging in the newly-kindling war against France?"

"No, I have not forgotten anything," answered Philip; "but it is no use wasting words. When I gave you that paper, I thought not you would be too late (which would not have been

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the case, had they not hurried the prelate's end); then I never contemplated Bonner seizing you, but had procured your passport, and secured your passage to the Continent. When once you were out of the reach of Bonner, it mattters not now how I intended acting; but now I tell you that Bonner has no conscience, no scruples. He is in possession of a secret, which a foolish domestic confided to him under seal of the confessional—secresy. Bonner, however, waits but his own time to reveal it; I read it in his sinister smile, hidden under his crouching language—he will perjure himself, and the Pope will grant him absolution; and the knowledge of this secret will break the best link which binds me to the Queen of England; for few know, as I do, her keen jealousy. All these difficulties you can remove whilst you are in England. Bonner fancies that you are at the head of a Spanish confederacy, watching his movements. When you leave this coast, I can hush up

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matters. Young man, you know not how much my fate depends on yours."

Alphonzo uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Hush," said Philip; "the time may come when the mysterious language I now use will be plain as the noon-day. But, mark me—'*Not until Queen Mary's death!*' You must remain here concealed in my own private sitting-room until to-morrow evening. Bonner will then be far away towards the north, whither the Queen has despatched him to quell a body of powerful heretics. Furnished with credentials to the Emperor, who is now in Flanders, your progress to fortune is sure as rapid; and the moment you give the necessary assent, you leave not this apartment as Alphonzo Stracey, but Alphonzo, Duke de La Mancha, with all the fortune and honours appertaining thereunto."

Alphonzo paused. The King had spoken in his hurried characteristic manner, and the

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young man had hardly time to realize the bright prospects held out to him. A dukedom, a situation in the army, fortune, and every wish his heart could form; still, in the chaos of ideas which sprung from the bright scene, no answer came to his lips.

"I will leave you for some hours," said Philip; "your answer will then be ready."

Alphonzo was left alone, with burning, intense, newly-awakened thoughts. What meant the King's mysterious words? How was he connected with Philip's fate? Then a sudden idea sprung to his mind, but he immediately rejected it. Through all the feeling of pleasure and astonishment, the image of Constance arose before him. Oh, how often love has a powerful effect in the whole future life of man! Beauty would not waste one smile or speak one frivolous heartless word, nor attire herself in all her attractive charms, if she knew that once her image was engraven on her lover's heart; her own folly alone could efface it. It was not

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only in her grace and her beauty that Constance appeared now, before Alphonzo's searching imagination; it was in the two-fold loveliness of her virtue, and her Christian graces. He drew forth a faded flower from his bosom, and repeated the lines he had seen traced in her book:—

> "But till thou hear'st the Truth Divine,
> My hand I cannot give."

Her heart, then, was his, and it depended on himself to secure her hand. Great, however, would be the sacrifice; and now, as in all romantic love, mountains appeared to divide him from her he loved. If he accepted Philip's offer, if he invested himself with his dukedom, his Roman Catholic faith must be sealed, and an everlasting barrier placed between him and Constance. If he refuse the honours held out to him, wandering penniless, unknown, escaping from prison with difficulty, what then would be his lot? Does Constance really wish me to make the sacrifice? Does she think that her re-

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ligion calls for so much denial?" Then he remembered that a year was to elapse before he made up his mind to any decisive step, and he resolved to let that year decide for him, when Philip re-entered. Alphonzo was prepared with an answer: he told the King he was ready to accept his offer, under some conditions. He would go to the Emperor in Flanders, and would enter the Spanish army, but would decline the dukedom of La Mancha until a year had elapsed, and, if the King then saw fit to grant him a request, then it might perhaps be one of a different nature. Philip heard all, and he wondered at many of the words Alphonzo spoke; but as he himself had spoken in mysteries to the young cavalier, he felt it was only just he should in return bear with Alphonzo's humour.

"I have one more request to ask," said Philip; "you shall see the Lady Eldrida before your departure, and she must hear from your own lips, words which no one else can pro-

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nounce so well as yourself: you must tell her whether you love her or not."

"This is the second time," answered Alphonzo, "that I have given a negative reply to this question; and it is doing me too much honour, to suppose that the Lady Eldrida cares for such a knight-errant as I am."

"The lady appears to think otherwise," said Philip, evasively.

"I will speak to the Lady Eldrida, if it be your Majesty's will and pleasure; but unless the young lady sees fit to call for an explanation of a few words of simple gratitude and courtesy, I shall not have the boldness to begin the conversation."

"You must be guided by circumstances, I admit," said Philip; "but I will prepare my niece to bid you farewell. Rest here till morning." So saying, he left the room, turning the key outside. The apartment in which Alphonzo was placed, was the last of the suite of rooms leading to it. No one disturbed him

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for several hours in the morning. Breakfast was little thought of in those days, when the dinner-hour was eleven before noon. Towards that hour, the door opened, and the Lady Eldrida, pale, but perfectly collected, entered, gravely, leaning on her uncle's arm

Her dinner toilet was completed; and if Alphonzo had before thought Eldrida handsome, he now saw her beauty enriched by her attire. Her robe, of rich blue velvet, was ornamented with roses formed of riband to correspond; in the midst of each, shone a bright diamond; the stomacher was ornamented with splendid brilliants, and her arms ornamented with bracelets of great value. Her dark, glossy hair, hung in rich tresses, and was looped up carelessly with a comb inlaid with diamonds. Alphonzo could hardly believe the dark, majestic-looking beauty, was the same warm-hearted, enthusiastic creature, who had sought his prison-cell; the quivering emotion of the lips had fled, and the kindling expression of the

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eyes, formed to speak love's powerful language, had given place to melancholy. Eldrida's whole appearance now wore the frigid look of a firm purpose; and as she spoke, her cold, measured words, seemed as if pronounced with condescending effort.

"My uncle has informed me that you wish to see me."

"I am going to leave England," said Alphonzo," and I——"

"You wish to thank me for visiting you in prison. The desire was hardly necessary, for I have visited many other prisoners beside."

"Farewell, lady," said Alphonzo, astonished at Eldrida's strange display of love; "farewell, and may every earthly happiness be your lot."

This time, Eldrida answered, with a marked emphasis on each word—

"Farewell, Sir; and may the same earthly happiness attend you, which you hope will fall to my share." She made a low bow, and left

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the room. Her uncle remained rooted to the spot with astonishment; but totally misunderstanding Eldrida's disguised coldness, he inwardly congratulated himself upon her return to reason, and laughingly accused himself of having given Alphonzo a very useless interview.

"You need not be sorry on my account," replied the young man; "I am only sorry for the young lady."

"Sorry! for why?" said the King, in astonishment; but Alphonzo made no reply.

Was he right? Had he seen through the cold surface of the icicled water? Had he traced the circulating current through the frozen exterior? Could he read the disappointment, the bitterness, the agony, which filled Eldrida's heart?

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CHAPTER VIII.

SINCE the martyrdom of Cranmer, no particular person is mentioned in the dates of history, as suffering at the stake for the Protestant cause. The same cruelties still continued; domestic circles were broken into; property was confiscated, and the secret tribunal, headed by the persevering Bonner, was as active as ever. But the Queen's attention was drawn in another channel: she wished to engage in the war between France and Spain. Cardinal Pole, whose cool judgment had much weight with the people, openly opposed this measure; he repre-

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sented, in glowing terms, the binding marriage articles which provided against Her Majesty's entering into this war, besides, enlarging on the disordered state of the finances.

At first, Mary listened to the Cardinal, and other councillors who followed the same train of politics; but suddenly Philip of Spain returned from Flanders, where he had spent the summer months, away from his fretful bride.

All Mary's tenderness returned with double warmth from her temporary absence from her husband. She promised him to fulfil every wish of his heart; and he coldly threatened, that if his reasonable request was not granted, he would never again set his foot in England.

What was this reasonable request? He ordered Mary to brave the nation's displeasure, to defy Cardinal Pole, to levy troops, to extort money from the citizens of London; and Mary, weak and loving, complied, though with great difficulty.

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A fortunate circumstance occurred to rouse the populace in anger against France. Some conspirators, headed by a man of the name of Stafford, were detected in a design of surprising Scarborough. Perhaps they were merely acting for themselves, and willing to save themselves by placing the blame on others; be this as it may, when Stafford was put to the torture, he confessed that Henry of France had sent them to make the attempt. Mary now determined to make this act of hostility the foundation of a more serious quarrel, and war was declared against France.

The revenues of England at that time little exceeded £300,000. The Parliament could not afford to grant a fresh supply. The Queen herself was very poor; she owed great arrears to her servants, but she continued to levy money in the most arbitary and violent manner. She obliged the City of London to supply her with £60,000; she levied before the legal time, the second year's subsidy voted by Par-

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liament; she issued many privy seals, by which she procured loans from the people; and she victualled her fleet, by seizing all the corn she could find in Suffolk and Norfolk, without paying any price to the owners. By these various expedients, Mary levied an army of ten thousand men, which was sent over to the Low Counties, under the command of the Earl of Pembroke.

She gentry who resisted the taxation, and the seizure of their corn, were hood-winked and muffled, and then conducted to the Tower.

The King of of Spain's army, added to the English forces, amounted on the whole to above sixty thousand men; and it was under Philibert, Duke of Savoy, one of the bravest captains of the age, that young Stracey began his first campaign. Montmorency, who commanded the French army, had a much smaller force than his opponents. The Duke of Savoy, after menacing Mariembourg and Ronoy, now suddenly drew up his forces before St. Quin-

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tin; and as the town was ill provided with a garrison, he expected to become possessor of it. The brave Admiral Coligny, Commandant of the Province, threw himself into the town with some troops of French and Scots gensdarmes. His uncle, apprized of the Admiral's intention of defending St. Quintin, sent a reinforcement, and a supply for the army, but the Duke of Savoy; fell upon the detachment, and not above five hundred men reached their destination to tell the tale of their disaster. Many of the ancient French nobility were slain or taken prisoners; the old constable Coligny, uncle of the govenor of St. Quintin, fell into the enemy's hands. The Parisians now commenced fortifying Paris, fearing the Spaniards would make themselves masters of their city. But Philip's whole determination was centred upon possessing St. Quintin, in order to secure a communication with his own dominions. Vainly, however, the Duke of Savoy bravely fought; his opponents were equally brave. Admiral Coligny, inspired the

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French troops to the liveliest deeds of valour. The Duke of Guise and his army were recalled from Italy. Philip of Spain perceived that the tide of fortune was against him. Winter was fast approaching; he conquered Ham and Castelet, and then broke up his camp.

The Duke of Guise now formed a plan which, although hardy in itself, had every appearance of being attended with success. My readers have no doubt already guessed that I allude to the conquest of Calais, by the French. Winter had now approached, and the fortress was very indifferently garrisoned, for the English of late had not been able to spare many of their troops, and their finances were too low, besides, to furnish the necessities of a fresh levy. It had been the custon of the Queen to dismiss part of the garrison stationed at Calais at the end of the autumn, and recall them in the spring.

Aware of this circumstance, Coligny had secretly sent some engineers to survey the for-

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tress; and although he was taken prisoner at St. Quintin, his papers were fortunately found by the Duke of Guise, who immediately began to consider the great undertaking of the seizure of Calais. I do not wonder at Mary's subsequent grief when the noble fortress was lost, for, Calais, standing exactly between the two countries, when taken by the French seemed as it were to say, "Ay, Englishmen, you may cross your channel, but directly you place your feet on dry ground, you are in France, on French territory." Whilst before, we could cross our Channel, and although away from our English isle, still feel at home, and tread on our English possession. Yet whenever I have been at Calais, I have always felt that it ought to belong to the French; their possessions ought there, and there only, to terminate. From the windows of the hotels, we gaze upon the flowing channel; we see the steamers gaily entering the port; and I hope others respond to my feelings when I like to hear the passengers say on land

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ing, "Here France begins." Deeply as Mary regretted Calais, heartfelt as was her grief when she declared. "The name of Calais would be found engraven on her heart" not more deep was her affliction, than the overwhelming sorrow of the bave men, who in Edward the Third's reign had resigned the keys of their fortress, with the fatal cord around their necks. When Edward's Queen, on bended knees sued for their life, then must she have felt as I do, that "Calais rightfully belongs to the French."

When the French were making secret arrangements for taking Calais, Mary was reconciling herself to Philip's absence by the reflection, that she had been fortunate enough to please him by leaving the forces he required; and although the news of her husband's prolonged campaign annoyed her, she was comforted by the assurance that the Spaniards, with their colleagued English reinforcement, were determined to continue their conquests.

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Mary now, more warmly than ever, strove to use her influence over her sister, and oblige her to marry. Sometimes she treated Elizabeth with more than ordinary kindness: then the Princess feared there was some secret treachery concealed. Sometimes she treated her with great rigour; and then the whole nation were aware of it, looking with a scrutinizing eye, fearing not only the succession, but the life of their favourite Princess, was in danger.

The Spanish Ambassador had been for some months studying the character of the English Princess, at once the nation's pride and the Queen's abhorrence; and he rather surprised Elizabeth when he made proposals to her, in his master, the King of Sweden's name.

Recovering herself, the Princess asked whether the Queen was acquainted with the King of Sweden's, proposals?

"No," answered the Ambassador; "my master the King, acting as a gentleman, first addresses himself to you, after obtaining your

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Highness's consent; he will then, as a King, to your Royal sister.*

The Princess broke up the conference, and covered a respectful refusal by declaring her attachment to a single life. When Mary questoned her on the subject, she received the same answer; but fearing the Princess would engage her affections unknown to her; she watched her closely; and not trusting the integrity of the spies, who gave her every report concerning Elizabeth, the Queen at length removed her from Woodstock, and gave the Princess a mansion at Hatfield. As Mary daily expected the return of Philip, her nerves became so irritable that she could not bear the slightest restraint, and even her favourite Eldrida often felt the Queen's temper was very intolerable; she therefore became anxious to absent herself from Court, and at length obtained her aunt's permission to visit the Princess Elizabeth.

* This conversation is an authentic fact.

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The latter, although flattered by Eldrida's evident marks of admiration, nevertheless felt ill at ease with the Spanish Girl. Her talents were perhaps equal to the Princess. Her powers of pleasing were even greater; but there was lacking that confidence and that candour which Elizabeth so much valued in her *protégé*, Constance, or Mademoiselle de Comines, as she was called.

Bonner, in his capacity of clerical surveyor into every mansion he chose to enter, was much ofter at Hatfield than the Princess wished. Towards Elizabeth he entertained more fear than dislike; but, above all, he dreaded the time when, in default of an heir to the Crown, the Princess would reign over the realm, now filled with cheerless subjects. He dreaded the shouts of the multitude, and the proclamation of a Protestant Queen.

Towards the Lady Eldrida, Bonner was greatly incensed. He falsely imagined she had been instrumental in removing young Stracey from his reach.

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The King of Spain wronged Bonner, when he imagined that prelate would reveal a secret confided to him in the privacy of the confessional. He would advise and almost enforce the person whose secret he had gained, to act according to his wishes; but he was too superstitious, too firm in the belief that there was a real absolution in the rite of confession, to break through its first and most sacred rule. Calipsa had once spoken to the Prelate—she was then suffering under an illness which threatened to terminate her life; and in a moment of fear she disburdened the heavy load at her conscience. As soon, however, as health again visited her frame, the old woman repented the part she had acted, and she boldly told the prelate that she would be guided only by that master who had hitherto cautioned her —that master, the King of Spain.

Baffled in every hope of intimidating the old woman, fearing to deal harshly with one in whose fate the King of Spain must from neces-

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sity feel interested, the prelate now resolved to possess himself of young Stracey; and imagining he was acquainted with the mystery of his birth, he trusted that the solitude of confinement, and on the other hand, the offer of liberty if he complied with Bonner's request, would induce the young man to confide in him, and then the prelate intended working his own pleasure afterwards; but Alphonzo's escape put an end to Bonner's views. It was not, however, because he wished to see the Princess Elizabeth or Eldrida, that he was now a frequent visitor at Hatfield; Bonner had gazed upon young Constance—she had looked upon him in return, and had not turned away her head as if shrinking from his gaze, but boldly, yet sorrowfully, looked again. There, then, stood before her that prelate who had caused her father's death—there, then, stood before her the man of infamous repute, who, in the space of three years, had destroyed 200 Protestants. Her breath came and went quickly, and the

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colour forsook her cheek, as the prelate put out his hand to press hers, after taking leave of the Princess Elizabeth. The latter guessed her feelings, and feared Constance would betray herself; when the next minute Bonner retraced his steps, and looking earnestly at her, exclaimed, with the tone of authority he always used, "Young lady, I will speak to you on religious matters to-morrow; I have never seen you at the confessional, and I shall now expect you."

"I have my own chaplain," answered Elizabeth, placing herself before Constance so as to hide her colourless cheeks; "this maiden is very delicate, and cannot attend mass in the chapel, but I will see to her religious worship."

"That may do for you, Princess, but not for a servant of God—a minister of His holy rites. Howbeit, if the young lady is delicate, I can attend her here." But, as a thought occurred to him that she might escape his vigilance, the prelate continued, "Or, to be more agreeable to

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the young lady, I will depute the Lady Eldrida to inquire into the young person's religious feelings."

"I am mistress of my own establishment," said Elizabeth; "and when I request the Lady Eldrida to shrine the conscience of my maids of honour, it will then be time enough for her to offer her services."

"Princess," said the prelate, approaching Constance, and looking at her again most searchingly: "Princess, you mistake me; it is not because I am harsh towards the maiden, that I thus speak, but the Lady Eldrida knows so intimately my way of thinking, that my mind on religious subjects is echoed by hers; and she has so much interested me already in favour of your young attendant, that I would willingly so fair a shell contained a pearl of rarest size, and that the conscience may be as clear as the exterior."

As Bonner concluded, he extended his hand once more to Constance, but she burst into a

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flood of tears, and left the apartment, rushed into her own room, and there continued sobbing for some time.

Elizabeth bit her lips, and, accustomed as she was, from habit, to restrain the words which flowed to her mouth, she felt this time that the work of self-command was a very bitter task. She was angry with Lady Eldrida for speaking to Bonner of her young friend; but her judgment, even in the height of her passion, whispered two things:—First, that Eldrida was Mary's niece, and it was impolitic to talk against her before the prelate. Secondly, that not aware of Constance's real position in speaking of her as a beautiful maid, in Elizabeth's suite, the Lady Eldrida had committed no intentional indiscretion. As her feelings softened by the power of a correct argumental train of mind, the Princess thought only of the necessity of conciliating the prelate. Candour, she had ever found her best armour in controversy with him; for men are often conquered by the

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very opposite force which they use; and Bonner, who could baffle any crafty person, always felt awed by Elizabeth's plain, truthful manner.

"My Lord Bonner," she now said, "the young maiden you saw is like unto myself; she passively submits to the present religion of the realm, but she would more willingly follow the Protestant faith." The Prelate pretended to be satisfied; bowed, and left the house, nor did he again come for several weeks.

"Ever wary, ever cautious, yet ever truthful Princess," exclaimed Bonner, on his way home. "Those whom thou wilt afterwards govern, will be ruled by no woman's weak hand. My power leans now, as a tottering tower; one loose stone will throw down the whole fabric. Mary's death will be that loosened stone, for I rely but on her for support; all feelings of this kind, however, are weighed down before the one idea of the moment. Is it possible that I love? Have the firm, yet dove-like glances of that fair girl's

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eyes, shot through my heart? Or has Satan clothed himself in that celestial garb, to entice a holy priest to sin? The Virgin Mary preserve me! I must not see her again."

Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, was then in his forty-third or forty-fourth year; and had not every beholder naturally associated his image with all that is barbarous and cruel, he would no doubt have been pronounced a handsome-looking man. But when once Vice has set her stamp on the human heart, it will blight the fairest exterior; and under every smile, under every word Bonner uttered, might be traced the hidden serpent, lurking softly but surely, ready to spring forth with its deadly sting.

Although Strype says he was born of poor parents, who lived in an humble cottage, known to this day as Bonner's Cottage, the prelate had received an excellent education. About the year 1512, he was entered as a student at Broadgate Hall, in Oxford. In 1519,

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he was admitted Bachelor of the Canon and Civil Law. About the same time, he obtained preferment in the Diocese of Worcester, where he first took orders. In 1525, he was created Doctor of Canon Law. Having now acquired the reputation of a shrewd politician and civilian, he was soon distinguished by Cardinal Wolsey, who made him his commissary for the faculties, and heaped upon him a variety of church preferments. Bonner was with Wolsey at Caw-wood, when the latter was arrested for high treason.

After the death of that minister, he soon found means to insinuate himself into the favour of Henry VIII., who made him his chaplain, and employed him in several embassies abroad, particularly to the Pope. In 1532, he was sent to Rome with Sir Edward Thame, to answer for the King, whom his Holiness had cited to appear personally or by proxy. In 1533, he was again despatched to Pope Clement VII., at Marseilles, upon the excommu-

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nication of Henry, on account of his divorce. On this occasion, he threatened the Pope with so much resolution, that his Holiness talked of burning him alive, or throwing him into a cauldron of melted lead, upon which Bonner thought fit to decamp. In 1538, being then Ambassador at the Court of France, he was nominated Bishop of Hereford; but, before consecration, was translated to the see of London, and enthroned April, 1540. Henry VIII. died in 1547, at which time Bonner was Ambassador with the Emperor Charles V. During this reign he was constantly zealous in opposing the Pope, and in compliance with the King, favoured the Reformation. This Bonner did because Henry VIII. was not to be trifled with; but as soon as Edward VI. ascended the throne, Bonner refused the oath of supremacy, and was committed to the Fleet; however, he promised obedience to the laws, and was released. He continued to follow the Reformation, but with such a want of

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zeal, that he was twice reprimanded by the Privy Council, and in 1549, after a long trial, was committed to the Marshalsea, and deprived of his bishopric. The succeeding reign changed the scene, and gave Bonner ample opportunities of revenge. Mary was scarce seated on the throne, before she reinstated the prelate in his bishopric, and soon after appointed him vicegerent and president of the convocation.* From this time he became the chief instrument of the persecuting spirit of the times, and with equal imprudence and relentless remorse, severed the sweetest ties of domestic life.

As Bonner traced his steps home, after his last visit to the Princess Elizabeth, his heart was unusually affected; and whilst Constance had inspired him with soft feelings long dormant in his breast, he had filled the young girl's bosom with dread of him, and brought again to mind her aged father, with his white hair, surrounded by the glaring flames.

* See Biography of Bonner.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE first month of the year 1558 had elapsed; the wintry reign of the season was beginning to be less acutely felt; the spring dawned, the trees began to shoot, and the first flowerets of the earth—the early crocus, and hardy hyacinths—were peeping from the still hard earth; the birds were languidly uttering their long imprisoned notes, and poor Constance awaited in vain her true lover's return. Had he fallen in battle? Was the light of his bright-beaming eye extinguished? Were his limbs stretched powerless on the blood-sodden field? Had she

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received the last pressure of his hand? Had she listened to his last words? and, above all, had he died in that faith, which promised life beyond the grave? Should she meet him once more in a world above, and in that ethereal sphere would their spirits commingling commune in blissful union? Here was a mine of searching thought, and yet Constance retained her own quiet, peaceful mien; she appeared as a creature of superior mould, moving amidst a sphere of beings, like them in flesh, but how different in spirit! Her early life had been tempestuous, but the raging war of the elements had not burst upon a solitary tree, placed in the midst of a forest, a meek mark to attract the lightning's dart. Steeled by the power of her faith in a God of mercies, she was as a well-arranged conductor, ready to receive, but to cast off again the elementary fire. Shaft after shaft of sharpest arrowed grief pierced her heart, and still one spot was ever brightly shining amidst the darkness, for Constance

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there to cast her anchor of hope. There are indeed some few lovely characters upon whom grief serves but more strongly to impress the holy truths of religion; but to give this assurance in Divine mercy, the heart must be hourly trained to survey in a chastened spirit every trial which God sees fit to send.

There was a native grace, a dignified simplicity of manner about Constance, which the Lady Eldrida deeply admired. The Princess Elizabeth's difficult studies were foreign to Constance's nature; and, although she esteemed her, there was also one point of her character which the young girl could not reconcile with her pure way of thinking. That the Princess should avoid, as necessary to her safety, every topic of theological controversy, was a very needful, and even an imperious duty; but that she should professedly follow the Roman Catholic rituals, whilst her heart revolted at its superstitions, was more than Constance could approve of. No persuasion on Elizabeth's part had ever in-

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duced her young *protégé* to accompany her to mass, or to perform one of the outward forms of the Roman Church. At Woodstock the Princess could screen the young girl from observation, but now the task increased in difficulty, since Bonner had noticed her. Elizabeth spoke at random, when she told the prelate that her young maiden was too delicate to attend the chapel; but one Sunday, the prelate called upon the Lady Elizabeth, and positively declared his intention of seeing Constance at mass. Elizabeth did not tell the young girl of Bonner's orders, until she had used every means in her power to persuade her with warning her of the danger of a refusal. The prelate's words, even when delivered by her kind friend, fell heavily upon Constance's ears; they seemed as the parting knell, sounding her exit from the world. A faint feeling stole over the gentle girl. Elizabeth herself wiped away the heavy drops which gathered on her brow, and then, rather dragged than led the stupified Con-

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stance towards the chapel. Bonner was there; and when Constance met his gaze—when she saw that instead of a triumphant or an impertinent look, his eyes were resting on her pale countenance, with a mingled expression of fondness and compassion—then the poor maiden thought that all was conspiring to persuade her against her better judgment, and she turned her head aside to hide the fast falling tears. She remembered that the evil one, whilst tempting Eve to sin, put on the sweet voice of insinuative sympathy. She remembered that with the same deceitful purpose, he tempted our Lord in different guises, and she turned away from Bonner, loathing his look of admiration more than his most withering scowl of displeasure.

And now the service began: the unknown Latin words trembled on the priest's tongue, and the chorister children, in their white robes, echoed in thrilling accents the loud amen. Deep and impressive was the loud-toned seraphim; high above the people's heads the burning in-

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cense was thrown in the silver sconces, confined to the priests' hands by their bright silver chains. When the mystic bell rung, and the congregation bowed low their heads, while the priest above looked up and spake; then, indeed, Constance felt that she had lingered too long; she remembered how in a foreign land her childish heart had revolted at all these rites. A mist came over her; she felt the Princess Elizabeth gently, but forcibly, bowing her head; lower still she bowed it herself, and with a deep groan she fell to the ground; her high-backed chair dropping at the same time, caused the noise to echo again on the stony floor. Still no hand was raised; not a head moved, and the young girl would have remained until the mystic bell had done sounding, so strictly was the Church discipline enjoined, had not Bonner himself, led by an irresistible feeling he could not control, advanced towards Constance, and raising her in his arms, he carried her carefully into the vestry. Oh, how his head throbbed as

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he bent over her pale features; how his gaze was rivetted on the only being he had for many years contemplated with varying feelings. One monomaniac sensation of revenge had lately pursued him; and Constance had appeared in his path as a creature of light—of dazzling beauty—of innocence and Christian virtue, to stay his uplifted hand and soften his heart. He lingered until Constance began slowly to recover; and, as he bade the Princess Elizabeth adieu, again he feigned what he did not believe, and said, with apparent sincerity—

"You are right, lady; the maiden is too delicate to attend the chapel—she need not go again."

And Elizabeth, the usually quick-sighted Princess, she believed Bonner; she would as soon have thought the roaring lion capable of feeling the lamb's gentleness, as that fiery prelate of a sensation of softness, much less of love. Bonner, on his part, did everything in his power to check the rising passion; but the more

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he reasoned against it, the stronger it grew, and absence only increased its warmth. Had many hundred miles separated the prelate from Constance, they would not now be more asunder; for the young girl's nerves had received a severe shock, and she lay on a bed of sickness, which might prove her bed of death. And now the prelate wondered why he had not, in years recently gone by (but as much beyond recall as if a century had elapsed), sought some gentle, soothing spirit, to curb the turbulent feelings in his breast; and, tossed about in mental strife, his spirit was lost in vain reviews of the past, until the Queen claimed all his spiritual advice and assistance, to cure the wound of disappointed pride, for—*Calais was lost.*

After well considering the plan laid out by Coligny, the Duke of Guise made an unexpected march towards Calais, and he next sent a fleet to attack the fortifications. Although the garrison of St. Agatha made a vigorous de-

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fence, they were obliged to lay down their arms, and retreated in great numbers towards Newman-bridge. Lord Wentworth, governor of the castle, was a brave officer, but finding resistance was impossible, he ordered his troops to surrender, and to join him in Calais, in the vain hope of saving the town.

The Duke of Guise thought his success certain, but he went on blockading the place in breathless haste, for fear his fortune should change. He planted his batteries against the Castle. Coligny's brother drained the fosse, and the French penetrated into the Castle. On the night following, Wentworth endeavoured to recover his post, but having already lost two hundred men, in a furious attack which he made upon it, he found his garrison so weak that he was obliged to capitulate. Guisnes fell soon after, and thus the Duke of Guise, in eight days, during the depth of winter, made himself master of this strong fortress, that had cost Edward the Third a siege of eleven months,

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at the head of a numerous army, which had, that very campaign, been victorious in the battle of Cressy.

No words are adequate to express the grief of Mary, when she found herself bereaved of her valuable fortress. The nation loudly exclaimed against their Queen, for sending her troops to foreign parts, and thus leaving Calais an open mark, for the enemy to dart upon. Philip of Spain returned to England, and he now boldly declared his intention of recovering Calais; but how was England ready to receive him? The treasury was exhausted, and burdened with debts; the people divided and dejected, and the people of Scotland, at the instigation of the French councils, began to make inroads on the borders of England. And Mary, the Popish-minded Queen, how did she feel? Listening to the superstitious turn of her mind, she looked upon the loss of Calais as a signal that Heaven was visiting her for some evil which she had done.

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She ordered masses, and she endowed churches; she wept tears of agony and remorse; and still the guilt-stained conscience was not relieved. But bitterly, amidst all her burning thoughts, arose the image of her sister Elizabeth ruling over the nation.

Philip of Spain grew weary of her moody fits; and to add to all her grief, she daily expected him to return to Spain, there to spend the remainder of his days, which since his union with Mary had never been sweetened by one blissful moment of conjugal love. Ill-matched pair! Is there a sorrow in the page of regal life, a sorrow passing description, it is when hands are joined together from motives of interest and ambition, whilst the hearts are severed and cannot sympathize. In a private sphere, a dissension in married life is surely a moral evil, passing the pen's power to trace; but in Royal dissension, a more dreadful picture of matrimonial strife is seen; for, added to the cold loneliness of the domestic hearth, busy tongues

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abroad are canvassing the disunion of the pair who cannot conceal their mutual estrangement. Happy then a Sovereign, who has moral courage to consult her own heart; to marry, not for interest, but for love—to add to the splendour of a palace, and to regal pomp, domestic happiness, and affection's ties, to be severed only when death, equally inherent to the beggar and to Royalty, can alone sever the bonds of united hearts.

The loss or gain of a battle, whilst in a material point of view it principally affects the Sovereign, still causes many domestic pangs. There are widowed mothers and disconsolate brides; there are orphans, and brotherless sisters to mourn the loss of gallant relatives, who, when last pressed in close embrace, were strong, and bright with life's uncertain pulse. Philip of Spain returned after the battle of St. Quintin; but many brave Englishmen, who left their native homes to fight under the banner of the foreign King, returned no more to

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cheer the domestic hearth; and children raised their tiny hands and pressed their weeping eyes; and mothers strained them to their bereaved hearts, and taught their lisping tongues to say—"Our father is slain."

Some gallant officers returned with mutilated limbs and flowing wounds; and as the wives of their affections hovered around the suffering invalids, as they caught the groans of agony, as they felt the burning hands, could the afflicted ones pray for life, if it were to continue such a tissue of anguish?

Amongst the wounded officers was Alphonzo Stracey; often he had placed himself before the King of Spain, and received the shot aimed at his Majesty's breast. Foremost he dashed in the fight; he appeared reckless of life; he sought for no acquaintances; he sought not observation. He appeared to have no tie to restrain him from launching into the midst of danger, and he performed extraordinary feats of active valour, when arriving before the

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walls of Calais. On his return to England, after the battle of St. Quintin, he reached the frontiers in time to assist the garrison of St. Agatha.

Many writers talk of love following the warrior on the battle plain; and Nelson, our dauntless British hero, is said to have been inspired with the image of "love and beauty;" but there are, no doubt, many officers, whose reckless hand is warmest in the conflict, who dart into the heat of battle with unrestrained enthusiasm, precisely from wishing to bury in oblivion the voice of love. Well, after all, this argument brings the subject to the same bearing; one officer fights bravely, but cautiously screens himself from danger, because he lives for love; another recklessly dashes foremost before the enemy's darts, because he will not listen to love. Thus—

"In peace love tunes the shepherd's lay,
In war it moves the warrior on;
And well may every Poet say,
Love forms the burden of each song."

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Whilst the furious battle raged, and the cannon roared, and loudly echoed the voice of the wounded and dying, then Alphonzo paused not to think of one whose writing—

> "Till thou hears't the truth Divine,
> My heart I cannot give,"

ever sounded in his ears, when a momentary pause in the action gave him room to think. And for more than a year, the graceful form of that lovely one, who had penned those decisive words, had haunted his daily thoughts and his midnight watchings. And he had kept his promise; he had studied the Scriptures, and weighed over and over the important subject; but wherever he went, the religion he professed was observed, and no voice was near him to speak in behalf of that mild faith, which teaches better than any other the way to peace and never-dying happiness. On one hand difficulties, persecution, and poverty arose; on the other, peace, honours, and riches. Alphonzo next began to wonder if Constance would not relent in

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favour of his doctrine, but his heart gave him spontaneously a negative reply. Then he asked himself if he could not exist without the young companion of his early life? and he could not satisfactorily answer the question; therefore, he dashed into the battle-field with the carelessness of one who rather seeks, than dreads, the fatal shot.

The scene changed; and, weak and wounded, the young man lay stretched on a couch; the warm drops of suffering stood upon his feverish brow, and the voice of anguish was wrung from the force of his agony; then, when the priest offered him the cross to kiss, as a way to salvation—then, for the first time, the young man felt a repugnance of the Popish rites. The priest knew not, whether he had spent his life in careless living, or had broken and slighted the commandments, but he offered him pardon for every sin. And who was this priest? Alphonzo tremblingly asked himself. Like himself, a fallen man, a-guilt stained mortal;

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like himself, heir to death, and saved only at the intercession of Him, whose blood atoned for the sins of the whole world. Perhaps, too, that meek-looking priest, in his ecclesiastic surplice, had imbued his hands in the blood of the innocent Protestants. Those persons condemned to death as heretics, Alphonzo knew, spent much of their time in exploring the Scriptures, and gleaned from the holy pages that constancy, which kept up their faith in the midst of the flames. From martyrs in general, Alphonzo's thoughts wandered to particular individuals, and the image of his lovely Constance arose brightly upon him. Surely her mild spirit erred not; surely her intellectual, high, aspiring mind, had grasped the right faith, and imbibed proper ideas; and she pronounced his religion superstitious and unavailing. A restless wish to know more, to explore more deeply into the sealed pages of ecclesiastical lore, now took possession of his heart; and after

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much conflict, and much tossing to and fro in the spirit, Alphonzo felt ready to

"Hear the Truth Divine."

and to turn to the same faith as Constance. Oh! man, man! creature of impulse, wavering, changing, unstable man! must the hand of a High Maker be constantly chastening, before it can turn his creatures' hearts to hear his sovereign will? Must misfortune or sickness lay the corner-stone of salvation? Cannot men be prosperous and believe? cannot the hilarity of the body echo the joy of the soul? Must that bright emblem of God's image be drowned in the absorbing pleasures of the ocean of life? and must misfortunes arise, before it can be wholly given to Him, who placed the soul in the corrupt body, as a type of a likeness lost through man's first disobedience, and consequent fall. Enough: burning thought echoes enough.

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CHAPTER X.

THERE is a secret communion between youth; and youth and friendship will spring into the hearts of the most opposite characters when they meet together; the bold and enterprising girl will look with admiration on the mild virtues of a meek and quiet disposition; and the weak will gather strength and confidence from a more energetic friend. Well is it when the two characters blend, and friendship's bonds unite the tie; but, on the contrary, if the stronger disposition twines itself around the weaker sap, and uses its power to exercise its

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strength over the the trusting heart, then bitter is the havoc which may ensue. Far be it from me to assert that Friendship is always an empty name; but still experience will daily show us that those enthusiastic bonds of affection formed between young and romantic minds, often lead to bitter consequences; and, allowing that no greater mischief arises than the pang of the dissolution of this friendship, surely that is an evil of great magnitude. It leaves a blank on the heart, and a void on the mind; it clothes life in its most sombre tints, and the hitherto clear waters of the streamlet of trust are crustrated with the thick film of disappointed feeling.

The Lady Eldrida, deputed by Bonner to inquire into the religious state of Constance's mind, fulfilled her task in the most delicate manner possible. Not understanding the motives which inspired Bonner's pleasure when he heard occasionally that her health improved, the Spanish girl, who now began to love Con-

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stance, dreaded the time when her friend's convalescence would place her within reach of the prelate's power. One morning, when Eldrida entered the invalid's room, her dark eyes were red with weeping, and her whole frame shook, notwithstanding all her efforts to appear calm. Constance tolerated Eldrida's instructions, and even strove to like hearing her controversies, hoping, at the same time, to let her mild truths shine through the Spanish girl's deeper thoughts; and thus both deceived herself that her friend was believing. The Princess Elizabeth, although possessed of many great qualities, never had the grace of patience; and, from her earliest days, always impetuously turned a subject of conversation. The only reason she complied with the Romish Church was because she knew that violence would not be resorted towards her without the most learned and tedious efforts being made to turn her from her own faith; and fearing her impetuous temper would lead her to contradict Eldrida's doctrines, the

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Princess never assisted at her conference with Constance, but secretly hoped that each one would be the last.

The roseate hue of health was very slow in revisiting the young invalid's cheek, and her pulse still beat with languid faintness; probably the long conversations she had with the Lady Eldrida retarded her recovery, and yet the Princess dared not check the interviews; as long as Constance was confined to her room, and yet not so seriously ill as to require clerical attendance—so long as Bonner could gain no admittance to her; and a secret voice, echoed by many persons in the realm, told Elizabeth that Mary's approaching death would soon call her to the English throne.

The morning when Eldrida entered the invalid's room, with her agitated frame of mind, her eloquence failed her; and, between a much longer pause than generally occurred in her reading, Constance took occasion to expatiate on her own religious views. She spoke much

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of the power of Protestant faith in calming all earthly passions.

"There, I grant, you are right," answered Eldrida, hardly knowing what she was saying; "at least, I cannot calm my poor heart, and yours is always tranquil; but, perhaps you have nothing particularly distressing to annoy you?"

Constance sighed, and evasively answered:

"We all have troubles here below."

"So we have; but with some dispositions they are more acutely felt. Constance, I have no friend to lean upon; I never confide in any one. My Royal aunt has no time to listen to me, and my beloved uncle is generally absent. My poor head aches from sympathizing with the throbbings of my heart, and many there are who pronounce me cold and stately, but they cannot see within. Constance, you can calm this burning pain; you can teach me the way of peace, and I will confide in you. We would not apply ice to a fevered brain, were it not

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that we know its calming properties; and I should not open to you my heart, so full of warmth and disappointed hope, were it not that you are so passionless, so calm, so good. Constance, there is a busy devil at my heart, and it will not let me rest; I look for peace, and I cannot find it; I wish to hate, and my hatred turns to love. Oh! happy-minded girl! calm English beauty! teach me, oh teach me, a cure for my woes."

"Lady Eldrida, pray calm yourself," said Constance, almost as much agitated as the Spanish girl; "let not any earthly passion destroy a mind which God has filled with other thoughts than these wild ravings. Banish the image of the person who now occupies too large a share of your heart, and my prayers will be united with yours to help you to the task."

"Very easy words to speak, young lady, but not so easy to practise; perhaps you think I love one who will talk thus to me? No, no; my love is not returned, and that is galling

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enough for Philip of Spain's niece. But that is not all; more handsome, more endearing than ever, the object of my affection has returned from the wars more distanced from me than before, for he has turned Protestant. And now the cup of my wo is full—full to the brink, and even overflowing; and not only separated from him by his coldness, my very heart's communion now must be different from his. It would have been sweet to have knelt down under the same dome, to have listened to the same priest, perhaps to have confessed at the same confessional; and Revenge, dire Revenge, is working in my heart, and she says: 'Eldrida, denounce him! let him suffer! he is a heritic! let him die!' Then this fond heart interposes, and says, 'Remember, it is Alphonzo Stracey!'"

"Alphonso Stracey! and a Protestant!" exclaimed Constance, starting from her couch. "Eldrida, still the throbbings of thy breast; to me Alphonzo now belongs; his heart, his soul, they are mine. It was for me he changed

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his faith: together in early childhood we have lived, and together now we will die."

Was this the calm, the passionless English girl?

Back fell the silken ringlets on the pillow, and the richest colour dyed her cheek. Constance clasped her hand, and she prayed aloud for her lover; she thanked God for his conversion; she turned round to Eldrida, but the latter had fled.

Long and deep were the Spanish Girl's sobs that night; yet the burning tears which fell quenched not the fire within; she wrung her tiny hands in agony, and she opened a book. She tried to read, but the writing appeared as strange hierographics; the letters were indistinct. Eldrida clasped her brow, and then, as if the action had caused the recollection there to spring, before her eyes seemed traced in large letters, her own long-since-uttered words: '*Sooner than he loved another, my hand should pierce her breast.*' Vainly Eldrida strove to

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chase away the horrid words; she thought of Constance, so lately her friend, so pure, so lovely; she tried to close her eyes to sleep, and awoke again with the words trembling on her tongue. And Constance, what were her thoughts? Ever leaning to the most amiable point of view, Eldrida's confessions caused her no pain, save the sorrow of knowing the Spanish girl felt the pang of unrequited love. Such was the elevated, yet meek tendency of her mind, that if Alphonso had loved her rival, she would have resigned her place, and blessed their union; but, had she not heard Eldrida confess that her lover was indifferent in his feelings towards her? Had he not turned to the Protestant faith to possess her affections? Yes, yes, he was hers; and soon awaited her the task of impressing more firmly on his mind the truths which she believed with such ardour. And now Constance longed to see Eldrida; to tell her how, in years gone by, she had lived with Alphonzo under

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the same roof; how his voice first taught her to lisp his name; how together they had wandered where Italia's sun ripens as it were the growth of love. All this she longed to tell her, and next to convince the Spanish Girl how much higher she ought to soar, and how unworthy it was of her to stand between the happiness of two persons beneath her in their station of life. Many times, however, Constance arranged the words she intended speaking, and Eldrida came not. Then Constance remembered how kindly the Princess Elizabeth had sheltered her; how she had protected her, and shielded her from persecution; and she reproached her guileless heart, for not having confided in her before.

Elizabeth listened to the gentle girl, and she longed for the time to arrive, when the land should be filled with like-minded Protestant thinkers; and as she embraced her young *protégé*, she assured her, that Cranmer had made her acquainted with her secret. Then the happy

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Constance thanked her Royal friend for the delicacy with which she had refrained speaking on the subject, and both indulged together, as young minds will indulge, in long and happy dreams of the future; dreams, alas! never to be realized!

Difficulties of course presented themselves: first, if young Stracey's conversion were made public, would he be allowed to keep his liberty? Then, would Constance herself long escape the vindictive Bonner's observant eye? And who was young Stracey? Where was his widowed mother? All these questions, even the buoyant spirits of young hope could not satisfactorily solve; and Constance felt a weariness of spirit steal gradully over her, as she vainly strove to find an exit to this labyrinth of thought. She had always trusted in a Divine Hand to guide her through every difficulty, and now she determined not to despond. As the sun gilds the top of the mountains after the tempest is over, so her spirits rose as she inwardly prayed for assistance and grace.

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CHAPTER XI.

ARE there not moments of intense grief, when the mind cannot hear the truths of religion?—when sympathy is ill-placed, and words of comfort fall heavily on the mourner's ears?—when the pressure of the friendly grasp is not felt, and nothing is heeded but the voice of the sufferer's own grief? Was such grief to be Constance's lot? Let us not anticipate.

Some weeks had elapsed since the loss of Calais, and Mary still brooded in melancholy contemplation upon her loss. The nation at large felt the disgrace of being thus beaten by

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their French adversaries, and each warlike heart palpitated with one desire, that of revenging their loss. The Parliament granted a supply of money, and the Queen fitted out a fleet of a hundred and forty sail, which were joined by thirty Flemish ships, and, carrying six thousand land forces on board, were sent to make an attempt on the coast of Brittany. Finding Brest well guarded, the English landed at Conquet; they plundered and burnt the town, with some adjoining villages; but a Breton gentleman of the name of Theisimon, at the head of some militia, fell upon them, put them to the rout, and drove them to their ships with considerable loss. An opportunity soon occurred to retrieve their fortune. The Marechal de Thermes, Governor of Calais, had made an irruption into Flanders, with an army of fourteen thousand men; and having forced a passage over the river Aa, had taken Dunkirk and Berg St. Winoc. Advancing as far as Newport, Count Egmont now came upon

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Thermes, and obliged him to retire; the Spaniards obliged him to close with a battle near Gravelines, and Thermes skilfully arranged his men for the conflict. He fortified his left wing with all the precautions possible, and posted his right along the river Aa, which, he conjectured reasonably, gave him a full security from that quarter. The English ships, roused by the distant noise of the firing, sailed up the river from every side of the coast, and flanking the French, did such execution by their artillery, that they put them to flight, and gained a complete victory.*

The Queen of England and Philip of Spain now consulted together upon the state of affairs; and it was agreed to enter into a treaty with France, negotiated on the following terms —that France should restore Calais to the English, and that Spain should relinquish Navarre to its lawful owner, Henry, afterwards

* See Holingshed, page 1,150.

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the great Henri Quatre. But this treaty was not made immediately; it required long determination on both sides. Meanwhile, Mary, no longer active, and greatly enfeebled in body, allowed Bonner to exercise unlimited power over the Protestant party, over whom he was more than ever master; for Pole, whose modest and benign deportment—and, it is often imagined, a lurking feeling of love which Mary entertained for him — alone weighed with Bonner, was now confined to his room, with an intermittent fever, and was unable to mix his mild admonitions in the dregs of the bitter cup which Bonner prepared for the Reformers.

It was a cold and stormy evening in October; the snow descended in large flakes, and the wind roared lustily through the many communicating doors in the vast Tower. Winter was exercising its iron rod; but not more chilly was the northern blast than the cold void which Constance experienced, as, once more on a bed

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of sickness, she was the tenanter of a small, but warmly-furnished room in the Tower. Why was the fair young girl there, away from her princely mistress? Who had placed her there? Alas! it was Lady Eldrida who had immured her within those walls, where, in Mary's reign, many hundred victims had last seen the light of day. Readers, think not this improbable; though revenge is hateful, it is too common a passion in the human heart. The raving mastiff bites with deadliest aim the master who has daintily fed him at his own table, and under whose chair he has oft times reposed. The raving maniac will speak most loudly against his dearest friend. The monomaniac will, in preference, slay one before dear to him; and the worker of revenge will sting with deadliest aim, where it has before loved with deepest affection. Day after day Eldrida thought only on one subject, only of Alphonzo Stracey; she dared not speak of him to her uncle; that friend so indulgent, so kind, was as obstinate as

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Eldrida, where he thought her happiness concerned. Philip heard Alphonzo's refusal of the Duchy of La Mancha with sorrow, because he heard also that the brave young soldier intended embracing the Protestant faith. Unwilling to allow him to fall into Bonner's hands, knowing he was too weak to be sent on the Continent, Philip procured him a place of residence, placed guards, concealed at a short distance from the house, filled the house itself with armed men, under the guide of servants, and daily received news of his safety, for Philip, too, saw that the Queen of England was declining, and then——oh, awful! to form daring plans, to be executed after a living person's death.

Eldrida was disappointed, when Calipsa, with all her boasted vigilance, failed to trace the young man's steps; and the latter was lost in conjectures when she was unable to find Mrs. Stracey, whom she had concealed, and to whom she intended to apply, threateningly if necessary,

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in order to obtain the news, which, perhaps, that lady could reveal. And as to questioning the King of Spain, Calipsa dared not, for his Majesty was in no mood to be questioned; it was bad enough to answer his impatient questions. Philip had several reasons for being moody; he cared not much for the English repossessing Calais; he was younger than the Queen of England, and her Majesty was daily growing worse from an incurable dropsy. Philip feared the Princess Elizabeth would ever think he had treated her with a lack of courtesy, and if she succeeded to the throne of England, what cared Philip, if Calais appertained to her dominions? Navarre was a territory Philip valued, and that he must give up to render the treaty binding. Domestic cause for anger weighed in the scale; his favourite niece obstinately refused to marry the different suitors which were offered to her; And the young man whom Philip wished to advance to honours, turned from his offer, and

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from the Catholic faith. And Eldrida; still she loved her uncle, but her conscience now was less pure than before; evil thoughts were busy at her heart, revenge crowding in her brain. No more could she look into Philip's face, with her dark but cloudless eye; no longer dared she let his lips imprint the fond kiss on her brow, nor twine his arm round her small waist, for Eldrida felt that he would soon spurn her!

Too proud to conciliate Constance, fearing that the Princess Elizabeth would read into her darkened heart, Eldrida now determined to have possession of Constance, to watch her, to have her within her power, to listen to the first words Alphonzo should speak to her, to catch those accents which were dearer to her than life. Well she remembered the last time she had seen him, when, leaning on her uncle's arm, she coldly bade him farewell, and she determined to see him once more, to conceal herself where she could hang on his words, and pour

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out her gaze, not in dissembled coldness, but in a last burst of warmth; and then—oh! then —what next?

Bonner listened to Eldrida's words. He heard the news; he knew well that Constance was a heretic; he looked steadfastly at the Spanish Girl's countenance, when she eagerly besought the prelate to place Constance within the reach of his spiritual power. Eldrida flinched not from his searching looks; her eye did not turn away, nor her lip quiver; and Bonner turned from her with disgust, for he knew her heart's secret.

When a bad man meets a companion equally abandoned as himself—when their heads work together in the same evil course, and their thoughts flow into the same channel—then no real friendship exists between them, although an outward show of amity may exist; but when man meets with a kindred spirit in wickedness in woman, then he abhors that heart which can change her naturally softened feelings of

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gentleness into the hateful passion of vengeance. Fain would a bad man, amidst his evil course, know there was an object in creation capable of stopping the bad tendency of his life by the power of her goodness; fain would he find a resting place of peace in the bosom of *a woman*. But when Bonner (who, in his capacity of confessor, knew every Court secret) discovered the rising passions in Eldrida's breast, when he saw her covering jealousy under the garb of religion, then many past sins of his own appeared before his awakening conscience, and he feared to look again at Eldrida, lest she should read that his bosom could feel—*Love!*

After the first day, poor Constance was transported to the Tower: too ill to plead, too ill to think, there she lay, passively stretched on a bed of illness uncheered by any familiar face. Eldrida dared not come near her (for guilt is always cowardly); and every time the fair young girl lifted her eyes from under the

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coverlet, she met the gaze of a withered-looking crone, and Constance almost shrieked as she turned away from the sinister look of those sunken, but still piercing eyes. This person was Calipsa: she was moody, but attentive; she thought the young girl was very ill, and though she was sent more as a spy than as an attendant, she fulfilled Eldrida's commands, perhaps better than the latter wished it; for she hourly administered the cooling draught, and never failed to shake the invalid's pillow. It would have been well for poor Constance, if she could have avoided showing her abhorrence to Calipsa; but she had been accustomed to look at the Princess Elizabeth, and her own English maid had, like that Royal lady, an open expression of countenance, on which shone the reflection of an English heart. When this servant, who had attended her many days before she had accompanied her mistress to Woodstock, to claim Elizabeth's protection, was refused to accompany her mistress, then Con-

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stance feared that some treachery was intended, and she turned away from Calipsa's dark and shrivelled form, with a dislike she neither cared nor sought to disguise.

Calipsa, however, had received orders from Bonner to attend assiduously upon her charge, and the old woman sullenly but punctually attended to her commands. She was unchanged in heart; ever ready to obey rather than lead, her strange nature would prompt her to deeds of kindness as long as they were enforced, and the next moment she was equally ready to dart into the opposite path of cruelty. She was a perfect windmill; a passive creature in others' hands; her conscience so blunted, that she scarcely saw good from evil. She was wicked without spite; she was good-natured without a heart; she liked a change, and took a particular delight in having a place assigned to her in any plot provided she was only trusted; and "if there is virtue amongst thieves," there is secresy amongst rogues. Never had Calipsa be-

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trayed her employers; never till the day when, as a confessional trust, she had entrusted Bonner with a secret which concerned many persons in this tale.

One evening she had given Constance her last dose; she had arranged her couch, had replenished the fire, and turned her back towards the young girl, knowing instinctively how much she disliked her, when she heard her name called, in the small room ajoining Constance's apartment, which served for her own bedroom.

The old woman instantly tottered into the room, and asked, in her own shrill voice, who wanted her?

"Hush! not so loud," answered Bonner; "is your charge sleeping?"

"She never sleeps," said Calipsa.

"Figuratively speaking, do you mean? for she could not exist without sleep," said the prelate.

"Do you call it sleeping, when the night is

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spent in talking and making incoherent exclamations? It is like the expiring flame of a lamp, gaining strength and brightness to glimmer a moment, and die away in darkness. That fair English flower will not last long."

"Old woman, speak those words at your peril."

"Ha, ha, ha, peril! My Lord Bonner, will that restore the bloom to the floweret? Ay, perhaps I may be wrong. I have watched only the darker flowers of Cadiz, and I have closed many a lovely dark eye in death's last sleep, and more than one dying breath has fanned my cheek; but perhaps this English bud holds her life by a different tenure. Ha, ha, ha."

"Cease thy laughter, woman, and rather bewail thy sins; mourn, mourn, and laugh not."

"And why not, my Lord? Why should I not laugh? Many a glad demon has re-echoed my mirth when I have obeyed my master's orders. They laugh but at sin, and I have sinned, so I may laugh. Ha, ha, ha."

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"Woman, have I not told you, that if you repent, your sins will be forgiven? Did I not tell you, that your repenting, and refusing to poison your mistress, showed a glimmering of remaining good? Did I not tell you, not to continue scoffing and railing, but to believe in the efficacy of the holy rites of religion, and be saved?"

"No, no, my Lord Bonner; talk not to me of repenting: though I did not poison her, I embittered her life. You forget *the left-handed marriage.*"

"No, no, I repeat it woman; there are greater sinners than you, who can be forgiven: fall down on your knees and repent."

"Ay, ay; perhaps some day when my cup is full," replied the hardened woman; "but Calipsa will not repent to sin again. Now, my Lord, what would you with me?"

"I will relieve you for a short time," said Bonner. "Go where you list; I intend speaking to the invalid."

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"I can remain here," replied Calipsa, sullenly.

"There is no reason why you should not," answered Bonner, "were it not that I am not used to be contradicted: go now to some menials like yourself, and bandy not words with the Bishop of London."

Calipsa left the room, with a heinous scowl on her dark countenance. Bonner heeded it not, but watched her until the corridor hid her round the winding corner; he then closed the ante-room, took the key, as well as the one outside Constance's chamber, and entering it by the folding door opening into the ante-room, he approached Constance. The noise of the voices in the adjoining room, contrasting with the silence which had previously reigned around, had stupified the invalid, and she sunk into a heavy sleep. Her white hand was extended on the coverlet, and her long lashes rested heavily on her pale cheek, so fair that each soft hair was reflected as if pencilled there;

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her light curls were confined with a small comb, but escaping the restraining curb, a few long locks hung around her. The room was darkened, and the bright fire reflected the only light around, casting fantastic shadows on the opposite wall. There was such a purity of expression in the fair girl's face, that as Bonner gazed upon it, he felt sorry to think that one movement would awaken her to pain and care. Fain would he have fallen on his knees by the young slumberer's bed-side, but he felt unworthy to kneel in the presence of one whose heart was so much purer than his. Bonner left the bed-side, and sat before the fire; he watched the burning coals, and imagined he could trace living forms in the spiritless kindling mass. What did that mass and another recall to mind? Oh! horrible thought! martyred saints seemed to stand up; he could trace the writhing features, the agonized convulsions. The smoke even was replete with meaning; it had the repulsive smell—Bonner knew of what—and he

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plainly heard the crackling sound. How horrible! how appalling! He stretched forth to catch the coals, and then he remembered that those heated pieces of the miner's produce were *not* calling for assistance; were *not* suffering; that they were *not* human creatures; but *they*, the injured martyrs, they would sooner or later be revenged.

Terrified beyond measure, the words Bonner had determined to speak died on his lips, when Constance, in a feeble voice, asked if she was alone? Bonner approached, and the young girl recognised his features. Contrary to the prelate's anticipation, she uttered not a word of surprise, nor of abhorrence; she appeared as if she had been prepared for the interview. After begging the prelate to light a taper, feeling perhaps that the dark reminded her too forcibly of his far darker deeds, Constance herself began the conversation. "My Lord Bonner, in bringing me here, you have of course treated me as many other Pro-

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testants; but waste not your time in endeavouring to turn me from a faith which is dearer to me than life. I feel daily sinking; but if I have strength, I will willingly go to the stake. Only waste not words; I cannot change."

"I know it, I know it," replied Bonner; "and if you were not to say the words, they are spoken in your whole deportment, Constancy there is fully written. Constance, for many months, and even years, I have gone on sinning, and have never allowed the voice of remorse to be heard in my heart; and I have never paused to contemplate the future, or to examine the course of my conduct. Religion, *my* religion, certainly has been the main-spring of my actions; and even now, I believe my tenets the best, the true, and the only road to savation. What would I then give to see you, Constance, turn from your blind-folded ways, and, kissing this cross, say 'I believe?'"

"Put it away, pray do, my Lord Bonner.

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Approach me not with that symbol of the Christian faith; for indeed, indeed, I will not worship it it reminds me of the threats you have used to better Christians than myself. My Lord, speak no more to me."

"Nay, nay, young girl, I seek not to distress you; nor can I convince you of the feelings with which you have inspired me. Pray for me, Constance, pray with me; but let me now, though, never perhaps, again, tell you how much I—I love you."

"Do you forget yourself, my Lord? Do you wish to insult me, because, I am alone, and in your power? What, is it for this you brought me hither? Where is the wretched old woman, a proper tool of wickedness in your hands."

"Nay, hear me, Constance!"

"Call me not Constance; speak not familiary to me. I am none of yours; I belong not to your bigoted set. I am—yes I will own it. Tremble, Bonner! let his image come before you; let his pale ghost reproachingly warn you

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to beware—martyred Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, appear before Bonner, and protect thy child."

Bonner recoiled several steps; then he approached again, and next retreated. Constance buried her face in her hands, and scalding tears of mingled fear and emotion coursed down her cheeks, and fell fast through her thin fingers; but when Bonner gently drew aside he hands, and she looked upon him, a reassuring voice told her not to fear.

"Let me once more call you Constance," he said; "and I solemnly swear that this is the last time I will bring my darkened image before you. I dare not look upon Cranmer's daughter with evil thoughts lurking in my heart. But is it evil to love one, pure as those bright angels, who raise on high their seraphic voices? Is it wrong to dwell with fondness on one, meek, lowly, and yet firm, who bears upon her the stamp of better things than thoughts of this corrupt earth? God forgive

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me; but if I could turn heretic, it would be your fault. Constance, turn not away from me; I must speak feelings which long have been dormant, are crowding in my brain; and Memory racks herself in vain to remember one solitary hour like unto this. Fear not, young girl, I could not harm you; but is there no medium between deep, burning love, and insatiable hate? Albeit, your affections cannot be mine; although my office as priest places an everlasting barrier between us; yet, Constance, once again hear the voice of love, trembling for the first and last time on my tongue. Now, young, girl, shudder not; heave not one sigh; chase away the flowing tear. I have said my say, I have disburdened my heart; I have calmed my feverish brain, and now thy tormentor is again Bonner; but not Bonner, burning for revenge, thirsting for blood, wishing to change tenets founded on a rock, hewn deeply in thy breast. Bonner is now a passive slave, ready to work thy will, ready to sacri-

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fice all for thee. Command, and though mountains should arise, I would wend my way along; through strife, through care, through weal or wo, thy slave I am. Constance, I conjure thee, speak."

But Constance could not answer directly; the prelate's last passionate appeal was lost upon her. She was buried in prayer; she was thanking that All-seeing One, who rules men's hearts; who change them from the fury of the lion to the gentleness of the bleating lamb.

Again Bonner addressed her, and Constance, feeling his love now more tolerable than his hate, suffered him to take his seat beside her, and then calmly bade him restore her to the Princess Elizabeth.

"I expected this," said the prelate, musingly, "but it cannot yet well be; there are others beside myself who know of your captivity here, and for a short time it must needs be so, or the Queen would believe the Princess had a share in shortening your captivity; soon, young lady,

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an epoch will open for that Princess to protect you without restraint—an epoch which you anticipate with pleasure, which will be the Protestant's glory, the Roman Catholic's overthrow. Ay men have called me cruel, but methinks I have been too weak to work out the glorious work I undertook, to establish the Pope's supremacy and the Romish faith. Long ere this, by one firm blow, the Princess Elizabeth should have been removed from the succession."

Again Constance shuddered, and turned from the prelate; and again she felt it was indeed Bonner, her father's murderer, who was speaking in his own callous words. The prelate saw the effect his last sentence had produced, and he felt inwardly convinced that he was indeed unfitted to hold any communion with one who shuddered at his very words.

"Then you will not release me?" said poor Constance, breaking the ominous silence.

"I cannot refuse you anything," replied the prelate; "but you will not think me unreason-

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able if I ask you to remain here a week longer, when I shall be going to the North, and will tell the Queen, that you are better placed with the Princess until my return."

Constance thanked the prelate so warmly, she so patiently acceded to his will, in delaying for a week her departure (and a week in captivity is, comparativly speaking, an age), that Bonner felt his softer feelings again dawning. He therefore determined to close the conference.

"This may be the last time I shall see you, Constance, and a right understanding must exist between us. I could not approach you without giving utterance to words which are not only repugnant to you, but unfitted to my sacred character. I could not hold long conversations with you, without feeling my faith staggering; and, besides, I cannot reconcile it with my conscience to tolerate a heretic. Conscience, you say! Yes, Constance; though all men should disbelieve it—though, after my

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death, my name be associated with all that is cruel and bad—look not on the darkest side of the picture; pierce through the intricacies of the path of my life, and if you can, Constance, pause when you find one bright spot to rest upon. As I have lived, so will I die, in the Roman Catholic faith; with my last breath, I will uphold its tenets. I have caused the martyrdom of many, but will you not believe that my conscience told me I was right? Will you not believe that now my conscience is telling me how to act towards you? Constance, could I not have made you feel my power?"

"Yes, yes," replied Constance; "though all men should gainsay it, I shall remember with gratitude, that Bonner was just and honourable towards a young girl completely in his power. Bonner, you have been my enemy; you deprived me of a parent; but you have saved the child. And if my prayers can avail aught, as I trust they will, daily shall

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they be offered up for your conversion, and your everlasting salvation. Farewell now; if we both have said more than men's ears might hear, I trust we shall both be benefitted in a manner passing man's finite understanding. I shall believe that there is indeed in your breast a conscience ready to be awakened, and to turn once more into the right path; and you will, on your side, know, that through the world's hate or fear, there is one being drawn towards you with deep feelings of gratitude. Farewell, Bonner; farewell."

Bonner pressed her hand, and when the young girl drew it away—was it a fancy? was it the warmth of her feverish excitement? or had the prelate dropped a warm tear on his saved victim? Had that hard heart really melted, and the tear of contrition flowed from its frozen source?

Bonner now wondered where he should find Calipsa; but he need not have wondered long, for she had never left the turning of the passage,

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where she was concealed behind a huge pillar, which supported the chambers above; and the prelate, unwilling to meet curious eyes, until he had subdued his agitation, walked for some time down the long corridor; and as he passed Calipsa, she vainly sought to catch the half-suppressed words which escaped from Bonner's lips. At last he paused exactly before the spot where the trembling woman stood, and she distinctly heard him say, "Everything I can do to please and comfort her, I will; to-morrow, before noon, she shall see her lover, young Stracey."

Calipsa heard the words, and she heard the deep sigh which followed; and when the prelate's footsteps died away in the distance, she burst forth into a croaking laugh, exclaiming—"Ha! ha! ha! Don't Calipsa live to see strange things? By my faith, the worthy prelate is bewitched by that pale English girl; or, if I could believe it, he is in love."

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CHAPTER XII.

Oh, could we pierce through the darkness of the night—could we pry into each other's secrets—could we lift the mantle of thought—could we draw aside the thick veil of hidden things—what discoveries one single night would unseal! Whilst one person rests calmly in the refreshing arms of sleep, another is tossing about on a bed of pain. Whilst one is free from even a distressing dream, another is holding communion with the most agonizing thoughts. More sound were the slumbers of Constance that night, when Bonner had left her, than she

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had experienced for many nights before: true, she felt sorry to have listened to words of love from the enemy of her Protestant party; but, contrary to her most sanguine expectations, she had found the prelate not only well-principled towards her, but she had secured his compassion, and that without having by any action, or even a look, compromised her dignity or her Protestant faith. Constance had not promised in vain; and before she closed her eyes in sleep, she had mingled the name of Bonner in her prayers.

Whilst others wished for his downfall and his death, she prayed that his hard heart might be permanently softened; and that she, a weak woman, would be the means of working out this wonderful reformation.

Very different was the scene in a far off chamber in the Tower. Not on the side appropriated for captives, but in a regal bed, the Spanish girl uttered her wild and impassioned expressions.

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"Calipsa could not deceive me, and to-morrow, at noon, she is to see her lover. Oh, Constance! fair and fortunate girl! thou canst not know the depth of sorrow into which I am plunged. Oh, strange fate! I have clasped the English flower close, close to my heart, and in sickness there I have pillowed her head; and she did not know why then my heart was so still; it was the stillness of despair. He returned, and then its quick palpitations were intolerable to bear, and—oh! horrible—I opened that heart, bleeding with anguish and pain. I opened it before my rival's eyes, and she knows its deep secret; and when the bridal ring unites that beautiful pair, when the fair English girl leans on that arm I have never pressed, then will she tell him of the Spanish Girl's love, and recall to mind the scene of my grief. Why was I not fair, like her? What care I now that my dark hair waves to please many admirers? what care I when they say the gazelle's eyes equal not mine in brightness? that not more stately

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Juno's swan-like figure than my Spanish form? Perhaps it is this very stateliness *he* disliked; perhaps *he* liked not the vivid glances of my black eye. What care I, then, for every boasted charm? I am not his English flower. It is the pale, pale rose he loves, and not flowerets of deeper bloom. Oh, Alphonzo! would that we had never met. But now—no, no, thou canst not leave her. *My hand must pierce her heart!* No, I did not say the words, but they *will* appear before me. Could I even hold the murderous weapon? Tush! it is a phantom dream. Oh, sleep, calm my throbbing temples—have pity on my heart. Heaven send me a short respite from pain. Sleep, throw thy heavy hand on every pulse, and heal my troubled breast!

* * * * *

How glowing are the sun's rays on a bright October morning! It does not shine like in summer, from the earliest dawn of light, but towards noon he sheds his glorious beams on

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the snowy path, and reflects a thousand diamonds on the snow-clad ground. The captive, from his high-barred window, cannot discern the beauty of his golden reflections over mountain and streamlet, and on the white-tipped trees, but his rays dart even into his obscure room; and then the captive knows it is noon. With what different sensations are those hues viewed! Sometimes the prisoner knows that he will contemplate the morrow's sun, freed from his chains, freed from his confinement; that in the possession of liberty, he will watch the heavenly luminary glide down gradually in the setting west. Sometimes, alas! the prisoner, for the last time, gazes at the sun's rays, and knows that ere his next rising, the spark of life will be extinct, and that the warm pulse will be still. Then how his soul lingers in a last contemplation of his bright beams! how the saddened spirit wishes the pain of dying over, and that he were already launched into that ethereal sphere, where his

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eyes will behold more glorious things than even the resplendent plenipotentiary of the sky.

Constance had risen; and, seated by the window—or rather, as near to it as its height would admit — she was lost in a reverie, in which sweetness predominated over the bitter parts, and bright hope had succeeded to keen despair. A sweet smile played around the dimpled mouth, and the bright tresses, more cared for than usual, hung in glossy curls of luxuriant growth. The young girl was still very weak; her fair cheek was like the blushing tint of the palest rose, hardly pale, hardly pink; and as she reposed in a chair, well propped with pillows, she looked queenly in her solitude—not Queen of a worldly domain, but Sovereign of a world of thought, too exalted in their range for man's improvement. The blue eyes, concealed under their deep fringe, were partially closed, for the invalid could not bear much light; and the small mouth was languidly parted, the upper lip disclosing the pearly teeth.

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Constance was happy, and yet she knew not why; she was full of hope, and she knew not of what.

What was that gliding noise, seeming to steal from behind the tapestry? What, but the breeze through the opened casement? Yet her cheek grew very pale; and again a rustling noise was heard, and again Constance chided herself for being so childish.

Another half hour elapsed; Calipsa had been sent for, to speak with Bonner, and Constance had remained still, and in the same position; yet twice again had she heard a strange sound, and her cheek had paler grown. A few moments more, and Alphonzo had pressed her to his heart, and had called her his own, his beloved; and she had leant her head upon his bosom, and had sobbed tears of sweet joy; and her blue eyes had gazed on his darker orbs, and reflected the mirror of her thoughts; her cheek had regained its bloom. What, was it the breeze again through the casement? but

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once more she heard a sound; and once more she heard a sigh. Closer still, Constance drew towards Alphonzo, and then she bade him close the window.

All now was still; and long was the uninterrupted conference the lovers held; they talked of happy childish ours, of sunny Italian scenes; they traced the growth of their love, and the anguish of their absence; and then Constance, looking earnestly in Alphonzo's face, asked him, "Are you a Protestant?"

And Alphonzo playfully put aside the young girl's tresses, and looking at her equally earnestly, he smiled as he replied, "Could I look upon you thus, my own beloved, if I were not?"

"Ah, then, my prayer has been heard; and if no other happiness awaited me; I should be secure of this one: chained now heart to heart, worshipping in the same spirit, will we raise our glad voices to the throne of grace; and since Bonner has thus given me this bliss by

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sending you to me, you too will pray for him —for that wretched, but still reclaimable prelate."

"Constance, you have showed me the true path of religion, and I will do as you bid me; I will pray for the man who, amidst all his dark and stormy passions, sought thee for harm, and left thee admiring, and feeling unworthy to hold again the language of love; who found a calming potion in your innocence, and a safeguard in your prayers."

"My Lord Bonner seems to have turned confessor to you," said Constance, blushing deeply. "Are you not afraid of a rival?"

"No, no, these burning blushes avail you nothing, and the smile which follows, alone I heed; and it says that you have not only bound me to you by earthly ties, but with an angel's purity have likewise linked my heart to yours in faith; so now in one faith, one belief, under the same temple we will worship."

"Alphonzo, Alphonzo, what is that noise?"

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"I heard nothing; your nerves are weak."

"There! hark! again I think I hear it; and ever and anon a deep sigh. What can it be?"

They both listened attentively, but all was silent. Alphonzo looked into the little anteroom, but all was still.

"Indeed, dear Constance, you are fancying things which do not exist."

"Perhaps I am, for I am very nervous; ever since the Lady Eldrida told me in passionate words she loved you."

"Constance, I thought you above being jealous."

"Jealous!" said Constance; "I know not what the word means. I pity the Lady Eldrida, but you wrong me if you think I am jealous. If you love her, Alphonzo, do not think of me; I would not stand between her happiness."

"But I cannot tell why you should even think of the dark-eyed Spanish Girl. I owe her some gratitude for visiting me in prison, though

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afterwards she coldly told me she would have done the same for any other chevalier; but I never entertained any feeling like love towards her. Hers was that commanding style of beauty—that unfathomable power of intellect—which either shines in noon-tide openness, or can lurk in the dark; and few could undertake to know the Lady Eldrida's heart, without long examining her impressive movements. Yet, without loving her, I feel interested in her fate. Although her parting words were cold, they had much meaning; she wished me as much happiness as she should feel herself; and I fain would know that she was really happy."

"She never sees me," said Constance; "but her own servant attends me."

"That is strange," said Alphonzo, musingly; "surely no treachery exists under that apparently too warm heart? 'tis a pity," he continued, smiling, "that she cannot find another Alphonzo."

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"Or," said Constance, joining in his smile, "that the laws will not allow you two wives."

"I should indeed look an enviable chevalier, with my fair English rose, and my dark-eyed Spanish bride."

And now an audible, gasping sigh, echoed through the room. Alphonzo started up; another was uttered, approaching almost to a groan; then followed a rustling sound, and when he opened the door, he fancied he saw the last glimpse of a woman's drapery, as a slender figure glided rapidly down the nearest turret-stairs. Fearing however, to alarm Constance, he returned to her, declaring that the wind echoing through the turret windows had caused the strange noise. The time was now fully spent, and Bonner was waiting for him in the court-yard below. Alphonzo therefore once more embraced his blushing Constance, and left her with a calmer heart.

Surely it must have been the wind, and she must not be so weak; but in spite of all her

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endeavours to reassure herself, the young girl felt so lonely, that she almost wished for Calipsa's return.

Where was Calipsa? Bonner had detained her for a long time, under plea of asking her questions concerning her charge, but in fact, to allow Alphonzo time to speak with Constance. How strangely blind, men are, when they are buried in one absorbing thought! Bonner asked questions, without caring for the answer. Calipsa answered without heeding the question; she knew the prelate's secret, and he knew hers. When the latter got tired of the old woman, and despatched her on a useless errand, then she had no more patience for such silly trifling; but instead of executing her task, she sought Eldrida's chamber, intending to tell that, *conte qui conte*, she would no longer wait upon the young girl, since Bonner no longer dealt openly with her. Calipsa had told her mistress all she had heard concerning Bonner's intention of allowing Constance to see her lover; she

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fancied that Eldrida's disguised coldness was really felt, and had so blinded herself, so wrapped herself in that idea, that she had no pain in giving the news which sounded to poor Eldrida as the parting knell of her happiness.

After waiting for some time, Calipsa was preparing to leave the room, when Eldrida rushed in, pale, dishevelled, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

"My dear, dear young lady, what is the matter?"

"Do not speak to me, Calipsa; you can do no good; and yet, oh! yet, I cannot bear alone my bitter anguish: when, tossed by a thousand contending feelings, I lay on a bed of sickness, then you bode me chase away *his* image from my heart, and I told you there it was engraven, and there it has been fostering the warm affection into burning love. Calipsa, my brain is distraught, my head is reeling; a thousand fiends are busily weaving their dread advice. The poniard, poison, anything, but rid me of my

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rival. What have I done? Calipsa, you shudder, and I have never seen you shudder before. Well, then let her live; but if she waits awhile, I soon shall be no more. Unhappy Eldrida, why wars she born to weep in the prime of her days, to die of a broken heart, and blighted affection? Calipsa, speak, speak; I cannot bear my own voice."

Here, then, was a new plot for Calipsa, and here she was trusted. She placed her mistress on a couch; she bathed her throbbing temples with a cooling lotion, and the young girl felt refreshed.

"Give me something to drink," she said; "the sight of that cool lotion makes me wish to drink it."

"Not that; here is some water," replied Calipsa, endeavouring to take away the bottle, which Eldrida held tightly in her hands; "talk not of drinking the contents of that bottle. *It is poison.*"

"*Poison!*" exclaimed Eldrida, holding the

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phial tighter still; "then give me water; fear not, I am calm now; but look not so wistfully at the bottle, I do not want it now; yet I will keep it to cool my temples next time they throb. Why do you stare at me?"

"No, no, you cannot mean it," said Calipsa; "yet I would fain have again that phial, it is most deadly poison; know you not how I dilute the smallest quantity with water? It is a Spanish prescription; give it me, give it me back."

"I am not used to be contradicted," replied Eldrida, sumoning all the authority she could command. "I tell you now, you shall see that poison no more. Go, talk of the scene which has passed between us, and I will drain the phial even to the last drop—my death be then on your shoulders."

"Do not talk so," said Calipsa, bursting into a flood of tears; "I who could die for you, would I betray you? But lady, dear lady! if you knew the horrors of a troubled conscience, you

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would not burden it with this sin. And if you really do poison the English girl, heed me now; a few drops will suffice, for it is the *most deadly poison!* but no comforting drops will ever remove the stain from your conscience."

"I did not say I intended poisoning any one," replied Eldrida, pettishly; "but you asked for the bottle, as if I were used to be commanded. Once again I say, you shall not have it. Now go to your charge; I will remain here alone."

* * * * *

"How changed is now my heart," exclaimed Eldrida; "how full of love—how full of hate; and the two opposites meeting, are too much for my brain; such intense passions can never commingle. Another day of like agony, and each vessel in my head would burst; the pain is intolerable, and fountains of freshest water would not refresh the parched soil. Oh, what a short space there is between misery and unhappiness; between a smile and a tear; between life and

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eternity; and yet that short space is a barrier difficult to surmount. The bear, confined in his circular den, climbs to the highest top of its pole, and there stands, the spectators looking on in irony, laughing at the monster's grim grimaces; but one leap, and he would be in the midst of them, and dart away from his pursuers the freest of the free; but it is that *one* leap he cannot conquer, and there he must remain on the provoking pole, or else retire growling into his low den on the parterre. There is but one step between me and happiness, for Alphonzo said it—'her heart requires to be sued long; and he might have sued it long, sure to have found its most tender side, its warmest affections, all for him. Surely he would have loved me—he *must* have loved me; but the pale English rose stepped forth in her almost child-like beauty, and the blue eyes looked like a bud in the midst of a heavy shower; it required careful culling, gentle nurturing, and she had it all. Whilst I, stricken

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as the deer of the forest, by the sharp pointer pursued, I waft in vain my heart-felt sighs, I shed in vain my scalding tears! Is there any excuse in Heaven for a dark crime? Is a broken heart any palliation? Is a reeling brain any plea? Dare I hope it? I fear not. Then Heaven see not the black deed. God forgive me!"

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CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER morning was nearly spent, and again it was the noon-tide hour; the sun shone not upon the dark, stern tower, but its battlements frowned in darkness; the elements seemed at war; the rain and the sleet battered on the huge turrets, and the wind howled through the long corridors. That morning, Constance could not rise; she felt more restless than she had been for many days before; and her whole life passed before her memory, as if she were collecting her journal to be read after her death. She fancied she felt her mother's

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voice, blessing her in her cradle bed; and the maternal embrace she had ever remembered, appeared but as yesterday imprinted. Then she dwelt with the friend of her childhood; she stood upon the dangerous brink from whence Mrs. Stacey had rescued her. Her childhood advanced; she wandered about in lovely gardens, the rich purple fruit hung around her, and its graceful festoons formed a bower, her tiny fingers oft times disturbed. She thought she wandered by the borders of the lovely lakes, that she gazed on the afar scenery of the Alps, and the distant panorama of Switzerland. The palaces, the noble buildings, the papal seats of grandeur, all passed in review before her; and thus in rambling contemplation many hours passed. The evening shades were approaching, when a low rap was heard at the door, and Constance having answered "Come in," the Lady Eldrida stood before her. Constance felt the colour forsaking her cheek, as she met the Spanish girl's earnest expression of countenance; the

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latter looked half repentant at having sought the interview, and Constance felt her whole frame quivering with emotion. "I would have risen, had I known Lady Eldrida intended honouring me with her company; but now it is again in bed that I have the honour of receiving her visit."

"You think it no honour," said Eldrida, sullenly.

"But there is a pleasure in welcoming a long-absent friend."

"You think it no pleasure," said Eldrida."

"Well, Lady, at all events you will allow me to say you are welcome here, but I really cannot understand you."

"I am not welcome," replied Eldrida, bitterly; "I am an intruder—an intruder into your room—an intruder into your secret. I have come in unannounced, I shall go away when I please: but you shall hear me—nay, I mind not your tears; I have shed mine till my eyes are dry with weeping; I mind not your sobs—I

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uttered mine until, in convulsive agony, I was forced to leave off. Why do you weep? Are you not blest? Is not Alphonzo yours? Why do you fear? Have I yet cursed you? No, but I have come to do it! and more: if you stand before my happiness, though Bonner may befriend you, my vengeance will find you out. As heretics, both shall suffer; you and your betrothed husband. Constance, you can save him from the torment of the stake; your heart is cold, your soul passionless. Have I not seen how you bore his absence? When my heart was being eaten up, when each vital part was preyed upon by the canker-worm, which never dies, you felt not this pain; and you call this love! You slept calmly at night, and you call this love! No! waking or sleeping, in silence or in conversation, I am alike full of grief, with the sapping mine of sorrow ever at my heart. Fair-haired girl, you can live for friendship. You do not know what is love."

"Nor do I ever wish to do," said Constance,

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"if this violent, passionate, outpouring of the heart were fed at its shrine. Love with me has been associated with a holier work of faith, lady. I sought not to possess Alphonzo's heart, so much as to claim a share in saving his soul. You once asked me the road to peace—I taught it *him*, and will teach it you. Keep your warm passions under a sober, reasoning judgment; pray without ceasing, and faint not. What would you have me do? To give up Alphonzo for a right cause, would wring, but not break my heart; to refuse him my plighted hand, and to take away that love which he has now, and thought of through the battle, through imprisonment, and at the brink of the grave itself, what for? To satisfy the malice and revenge of a jealous Spanish girl. Eldrida, you have roused my passion; and now leave me, lest your vehemence teach my passionless heart to rebel."

Eldrida did leave her; she gained her chamber; she emptied the contents of a small phial,

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and substituted a colourless liquor. She retraced her steps, and noiselessly entering the ante-room, which led to Eldrida's, she placed the phial again on the chimney. She listened one moment: she heard Constance sobbing convulsively; then she rushed down to her own room, bolted the door, and sunk senseless on the floor.

Hardly had Eldrida left Constance, when, cautiously mounting the staircase, Alphonzo once more entered the room where Constance lay stunned by the emotion her frame had undergone in the trying interview with the high-spirited Spanish Girl; her generous soul reproached her for having uttered one harsh word. Perhaps she could have soothed, perhaps she could have comforted, Eldrida. In faltering accents she told her lover all that had passed, but he did not upbraid her. He suppressed with difficulty his indignation towards Eldrida for seeking her rival on a bed of sickness.

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"Calm yourself, my Constance; our prospects soon will change. The Queen is relenting in her persecutions; her continued illness whispers in her ears, that after death comes judgment. Bonner will pretend to be too busy to look into the particulars of the case. We will kneel before the King of Spain, and he will bless our union."

"Ah, Alphonzo, as I hear you speak, I feel my heart grow heavy; but, think me not wanting in trust, nor accuse my temper of being pettish and superstitious, when I say, that through your smiling hemisphere of hope and love, I see dark clouds arising. Whilst angels hover in your clear sky, mine is replete with dark-looking creatures; and, even now, the Spanish Girl's eye is before my mind, and makes me tremble."

"Constance," said Alphonzo, turning very pale, he knew not why; "you are ill and weakened, and you do not take sufficient restoratives. You recover from one feverish attack

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to be plunged into some fright, and new illness succeeds. Do you not take any soothing potions? Something to do you good? Come, I must be your doctor."

"Well, how very strange that I was thinking that you looked ill; and, at all events, I have agitated you as much as Eldrida has harmed me; so we both require a calming potion. There is one on the chimney in Calipsa's room; open this door, you can then go in."

Alphonzo obeyed; he approached the chimney, carefully read the label, which ordered the dose to be taken in two parts.

"That is the bottle," said Constance, "I almost hoped I should not have required another; but there is fortunately enough for two persons. Now, bring a second glass, and, instead of drinking together a good toast of malmsey, gay knight, you must fain accept a reviving draught."

Alphonzo took the bottle, shook it, poured out two glasses of it: "God bless you, my beloved, and restore you to health."

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"God bless you, and strengthen your faith in Him," answered Constance; and they both swallowed the contents.

* * * * *

Eldrida lay for some time in a death-like swoon; but at length she recovered her consciousness, and with it, an indistinct idea of having seen Constance, of having spoken harsh words, and then—oh! then, her reason returned, and she recollected everything. She arose from the ground, hastily swallowed a glass of water, to prevent herself fainting, then rushed into *the* ante-room, and looked on the chimney: *the* bottle was no longer there. A dead faintness came over her; she leant against the wall for support; she tried to pray, but she dared not; she tried to weep, but she could not. Her trembling limbs at length regained some strength; she wiped the drops which had gathered on her brow, and then tottered, rather than walked, into the next room. Oh! horrible sight! Gasping in the last agonies of death,

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Alphonzo Stracey was extended on the floor. The fallen chair told that the writhing pain had laid him there. His features were distorted in horrible convulsions, and his hands were tightly clinched. One deep groan after the other burst from him; once he looked upon Eldrida, but his eyes grew sightless, his breath short; and looking still fixedly at the palsied, wretched Spanish Girl, he expired in unspeakable agony.

Eldrida rushed past him; she almost trod on the cold corpse; she knew not what she did: she approached the bed, she drew down the coverlit, and she contemplated the awful work of her dire revenge. Her young rival lay cold and inanimate; she had apparently died in less pain than her lover—perhaps expired in her sleep. Her blue eyes were closed, and the only alteration in her lovely countenance was, that instead of the sweet smile round her mouth, the lips were parted, and slightly, very slightly convulsed. Lower and lower Eldrida bent

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her head, until it touched the cold frame; she listened for one sound, one slight quivering sign of life. No, no; the bright spirit had flown away. Constance was dead, cold, and gone!

* * * * *

Hours flew by, and Bonner grew angry with Alphonzo for lingering with Constance. He patiently waited for some time, for he had promised to see her no more; but at last he could no longer command his temper, and he rushed up to that fatal chamber. What there met his gaze? The brave young soldier, in his first manhood's dream of hope and love; and the fair young girl, so lovely, so good, both slumbering in one everlasting sleep! What did the awful sight mean? Not a sound was heard in that chamber of death, silent as the tomb; not a trace was there of a murderer's hand, but its awful work was seen. Bonner had destroyed many a warm, beating heart, but there had ever been a hope of pardon, if the vic-

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tim recanted. He had never murdered thus the young; and he raised the young man's corpse with the remaining hand he had (the other he had burned); then he went to the bed where Constance lay; he strove to catch at a hope of life; he rubbed the hands, but no circulation came; he kissed the lips, but they were cold and clammy: and, was it a fancy? he tasted a strange thing—a deadly, sickly taste—the poisoned draught. Then Bonner guessed part of the truth, and he swore over those cold pale forms to revenge their death—to pursue their murderers with sure aim. How to proceed first he knew not. Bonner was beside himself, and for a moment he wondered if he envied not the calm sleep of death. At the thought of death, his sins ever recurred to his mind, and Bonner rushed out of the room, daring to think only of one thing—to bury thought in one feeling of retaliation and revenge. With hurried steps, he trod many dark passages in the Tower; he bent down through arches, descended winding

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steps, and opened concealed doors known only to himself. At last he reached a room; he paused not to knock, he rushed in. A woman, bearing the traces of much loveliness, but very pale and thin, started up as the prelate entered—so ghastly, so heinously frightful, that the poor lady drew back to the furthest end of the room.

"What now? what now?" she said, in a touching voice, seeming to say, "Have I not suffered enough?"

"Do you ask, what now? Ah, poor lady! you will know soon enough. Go, reach Philip's presence; throw yourself low at his feet; ask for revenge, for searching, never-pausing revenge. Go, tell him that your son—*his* son, is—is—lady, is poisoned."

"What, do you bring me these words to terrify me? No, they cannot be true; yet your agitation, your pallid face—yes, you are not speaking false. Show me the way, Bonner; speed on, I will follow you. Is he not my hus-

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band? Although he wished to kill me, he *is* my husband; and if he has anything to do with this base action, he shall never escape my vengeance! Is it a dream? Bonner, you could not trifle with a mother's heart? My poor boy!"

"Lady, hear me again; hear me whilst I am calm enough to speak. Your son, and his betrothed Constance, Cranmer's daughter, they are both dead; they have both been poisoned, and their memory asks for revenge."

"Revenge!" said Mrs. Stracey. "Is there a heinous sin that asks for it, it is this. Could the sun of Heaven shine upon such murderers? Could they bear life? Ought they to live? But why was the black deed done? Why was that sweet, fair girl, poisoned too? Oh, Bonner! speed on, speed on. I cannot tarry."

"Where go you, lady?"

"To the King!"

They did not speak another word; the prelate hushed his lamentations, and the mother

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her sighs; and they sped on with the swiftness of lightning. They opened Philip's most private rooms, but he was not there; they rushed by the wondering household; they overturned many a gaping page; at last they gained the presence-chamber. Bonner threw wide open the door, and then crossed his hands in sullen determination. Mrs. Stracey advanced: there was the lover of her youthful days, gay and gallant as ever; his sullen bride, England's Queen, was by his side; he was holding long and earnest conversation with her, and her face was dark and gloomy; disease there had stamped her hand, and pain had laid her wrinkles on the brow.

How the King started. Was it a phantom from the world of spirits? Was it a ghost in earthly form? or did Agnes Stracey, his injured Agnes, stand before him? Philip's face turned ashy pale, his hair stood erect on his head; his knees shook together; and Mrs. Stracey, mistaking all these symptoms for the quivering of

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remorse felt for his last crime, burst forth in all the wild eloquence of a mother's love—

"Base, mean, murderous man! King of Spain, dare you stand in the presence of your English bride, of a crowned Queen, and fear not an injured woman's revenge? Was it because you found out that my life was saved, that you sought to murder my beautiful boy? Was he not your son, your own brave boy? Has he not fought by your side? Has he not been taught to love the hand which was raised to murder his mother? Has he not wandered through life, without knowing whom to call 'Father?' Has he not been separated from his mother, lest your hand should again be put forth to do her harm? Have I not hidden myself from your eye, and buried my life in seclusion, and for many months dwelt in a damp and distant room in this Tower? Then Bonner told me, that you spoke softly to my boy; that (yes, tremble; before your acknowledged wife I say it) you waited but *her* death, to bring

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forward my son's claims to honour and high station; and now, false man! treacherous husband! King unworthy of a sceptre! you have poisoned my son. His dark eye, why was it like yours? Ah, it will never beam again; and his raven hair, which in his baby hours I loved to twine, is now clustering damply around his cold brow. Heaven, wilt thou see the deed of horror? Wilt thou——"

* * * * *

"Woman, I know you not. You are raving. How dare you approach the Queen with your idle words. Go, you are raving!"

'Raving?" said Mrs. Stracey, laughing, hysterically; "go with Bonner—he will show you your murdered son; go, look at the work of death you have wrought; go kneel down, and ask God if perchance he can forgive you; I cannot?

"Woman, I again say I do not understand you. I now acknowledge having a son, but I never raised my hand to harm him. Bonner,

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I follow thee; haste, and thou shalt answer for this scene."

But Bonner replied not; he swiftly mounted the staircase. Philip followed, and Mrs. Stracey was left alone with the Queen.

Then she poured forth her heart before her astonished hearer; then she told the tale of her early love; how she had once been a fair and guileless girl; how Philip, in a tour through Italy, met her in that clime; how she withstood his daring love; how, not knowing his rank, she confessed, at last, her own love in return; and when Philip at last threw aside his incognito, how she wept and sobbed; how her nights were spent in watching, and her days in wretchedness; and still she refused to be his. Then she told how, imposing on her youth (for sixteen summers had not quite gone over her head), the King had persuaded her, that although he could only unite himself to Royalty, still a "left-hand marriage would be binding;" that he would never marry any other way, and that she alone

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would ever lay claim to his heart; how she pondered over his words; how they fed upon her mind; how she consented. Then, for a few short years, came love and bliss; but at last, Philip grew weary of his bride, and repented of the tie, even of this "left hand-marriage;" how, night and day, he sought to find the paper which mutely witnessed the nuptial; how he removed from his path every eye-witness to the act; how next Calipsa was persuaded to kill her; but when the time arrived, when her dark-eyed boy was pressed to her bosom, and in artless innocence he smiled upon the very being who was sent to do the black deed; how then Calipsa turned from her sin, but embittered her life, by binding her by the most solemn oath never to reveal her existence; how she had long wandered, wretched and forsaken, without one tie save her boy; and when that son grew up, Calipsa once more appeared before the mother, and bade her separate herself from him, bade her choose between his death

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and his advancement. Then was it that he loved Cranmer's gentle daughter, and the task was doubly embittered by this fact. But Calipsa, fearing Philip would discover her existence, tore her forcibly away, and kept her concealed, until Bonner, finding her in his research after heretics, had wrung the truth from Calipsa, who was on a bed of sickness; and now she claimed vengeance for her murdered son.

Mary heard no more; she fell down in a swoon.

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CONCLUSION.

WHAT strange rumour is heard throughout the land? Why are those loud shouts echoed? The road from Hatfield is lined with people, and from the Houses of Parliament the members are pouring. Hark! they exclaim, "God save Queen Elizabeth! Long and happily may she reign!"

The Princess Elizabeth arrived in London, and she entered the gloomy Tower; she reflected on the difference in her present fortune, and knelt down to thank her God.

The prison doors flew open, and the rescued Protestants knew that "*Mary was no more.*"

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Where was Philip? Away in the Low Countries. Lord Cobham was despatched by Elizabeth to inform him of his Queen's death, and her own accession to the Throne. She thanked the Spanish Monarch for the protection he had often shown her, and hoped that their friendship would continue to exist.

How did Philip receive the message? He refused, in the first place, to continue the proposed treaty with France. What cared he now if the English regained Calais? This, perhaps, was the only cause why the nation regretted Mary's death. First, Philip ordered the Duke of Teria to make proposals of marriage to Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty refused him; but in a manner so obliging, so evasive, that Philip heeded not the refusal, and sent his messengers to Rome, to order the dispensation.

Meanwhile, Philip passes much of his time in endeavouring to comfort a pale, weeping girl, who hangs upon his arm.

"Eldrida, you did it in a moment of revenge;

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you were beside yourself. Be comforted; look up again; there is surely some hope."

"Oh, none for such a sinner as I am. No, thousands of masses could not calm my mind, nor a deluge of tears relieve my brain. Now I see Constance before me; I feel her cold lips, and I press her clammy hand. Oh, why paused I not? Why did I not dash the fatal phial to the ground? Why did I ever see *poison*."

Dreadful convulsive fits followed these exclamations of grief: the mind became enfeebled by the body's sufferings, and soon the Spanish Girl leant no more on her uncle's arm, but reclined on a couch by the open verandah. The warm sun shone through the blinds; the room was perfumed, and refreshingly sprinkled with odoriferous waters; delicacies of every kind surrounded the dying girl's couch. But dark was her broken heart; well Eldrida knew that the most gloomy prison-walls were too good for her; and she loathed the luxuries she was unworthy to touch.

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The soft breeze fanned her sunken cheek; and she turned her head feebly aside, as if the air were too pure for her. She spoke to her uncle, but she never looked upon his face; her eyes were always downcast and heavy.

A few days more, and a priest knelt by her bed-side. The physician shook his head; and naught was heard through the room but the prayers of the priest. At the foot of the bed Calipsa knelt, like a grim shadow, so unearthly she looked; so wan, so thin.

The King of Spain encircled Eldrida's head with his arms, and his warm tears fell on her long tresses. They shaded a face of such exquisite beauty, that who would have thought shame and guilt had robbed the colourless cheek of its bloom?

It is a solemn thing to sit by the death-bed of departing worth—to watch the expiring embers of a fire which has been well tended; but, how much more awful to whisper words of comfort into the sinner's ears? To hope and

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trust in mercy, but hardly dare to expect it. The priest prayed, and clasped his hands in fervent supplication; but, alas! he had heard that young girl's confession, and he trembled. Many other secrets, dark and gloomy, he had heard, but never one like this; and, as he looked upon the dying girl, how he shuddered to think that she would soon be launched before a just tribunal, with her awful sins upon her youthful head.

A calm stupor had succeeded to Eldrida's violent fits of grief; and, for many days, although she prayed not audibly, her soul was busily communing away from earthly thoughts. Let us draw a curtain over those thoughts. Surely she had seen a bright vision; surely some sustaining arm was, in mercy, stretched forth to receive her parting spirit; for, without one groan, she expired.

Death, which, for a time, leaves a dreary blank in the heart, in the home, in the very

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town in which we dwell, after a time is forgotten in the world's busy throng.

Philip of Spain left the scene of his last sorrow, and Calipsa remained, watching with earnestness over the couch of a lady, still pale, still melancholy, but resigned to her fate; that lady is Mrs. Stracey. Upon her brow sorrow is written, and no smile plays upon her lips, but a calm heart dwells within. She looks forward to death as the harbinger of peace; for, in a world above, she hopes to meet again her dark-eyed boy and his fair betrothed. And now she has forgiven her enemies, and prays for the forgiveness of that being, once innocent —lately so wretched, so degraded—that unhappy "SPANISH GIRL!"

Lea Grove, Blackheath.

THE END.

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